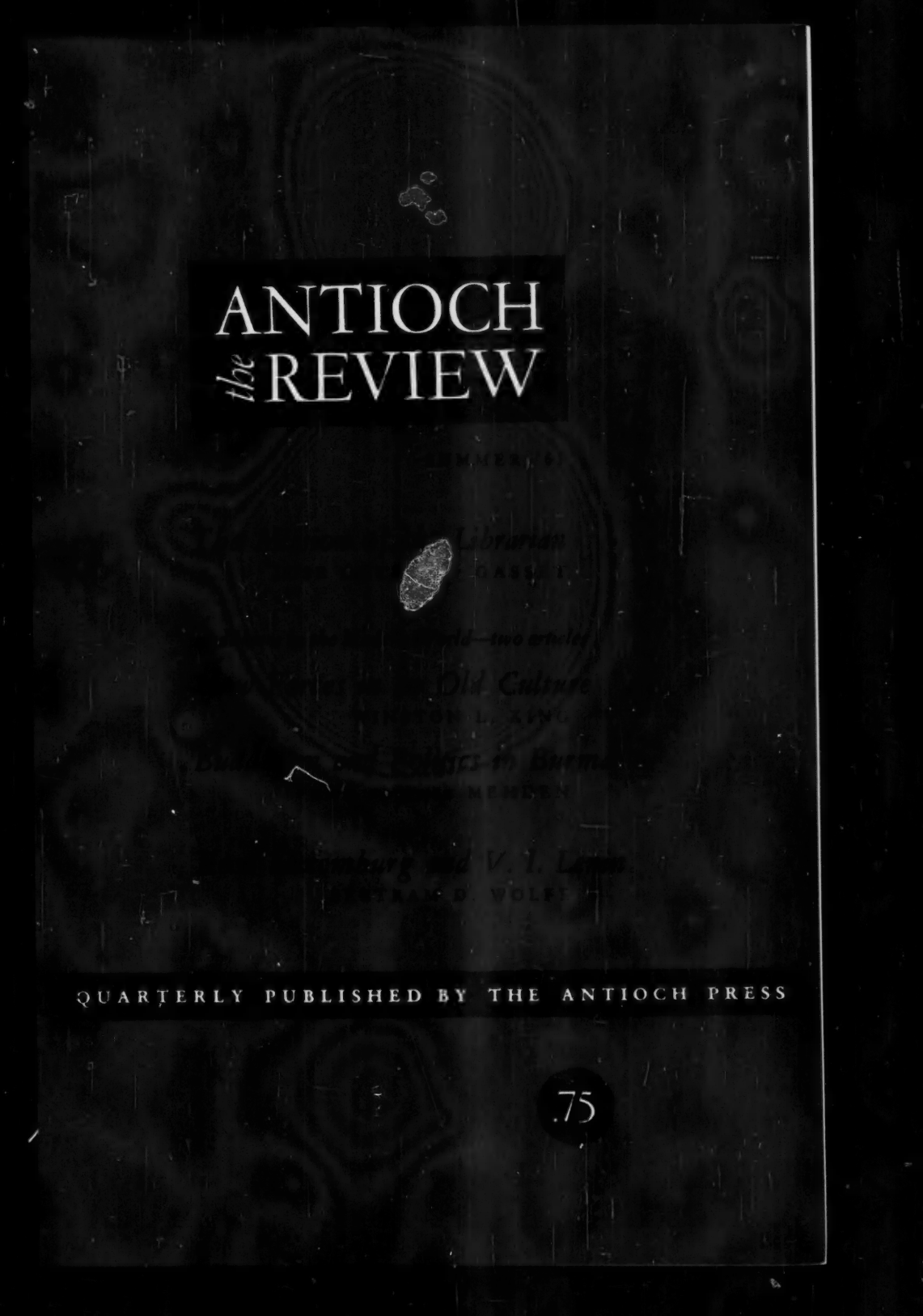
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ANTIOCH *the* REVIEW

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Editor's Shop Talk

■ In a television report on Laos a few months ago we were struck by a shot of a Laotian peasant happily hammering old shell casings into images of the Buddha. This was not a swords-into-plowshares scene but was taken while the fighting was at its height. This peasant was simply more concerned with the "laying up of good deeds" than with the political control of his country. And his attitude seems typical of the majority of Laotians. Even those in the villages that have been captured and recaptured by the two forces seem strangely unconcerned with what the fighting is about, and it isn't just the ignorance and illiteracy of these back-jungle natives. It is that their eyes are fixed on other goals.

It is possible that the future of these Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia as free, independent nations—Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma—will lie not in economic or political solutions alone, but in how these solutions can be wedded to or developed out of the Buddhist view of life. How much social change, for instance, can a fatalistic philosophy encourage? How much fighting for any cause will be done by a people with such a reverence for all forms of life?

An understanding of questions like these may be as important to the free world as an understanding of the economic needs of Southeast Asia. Steps toward such understanding are provided by two articles in this issue (pages 155 and 166) which examine the course of Buddhism in modern Burma.

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International Index to Periodicals

■ The television program mentioned above was one of the many excellent excursions into journalism made by the networks this past season. Starting with the political conventions last summer and the campaign that followed, highlighted certainly by the candidates' debates, the programmers of television seem to have discovered that there is an audience which actually prefers Ed Murrow to Ed Sullivan, a report on a showdown in an Alabama bus station to a showdown on the streets of Cactus Gulch. More important, the sponsors have realized it too. This year of CBS Reports, NBC White Papers, Eyewitness to History, Huntley-Brinkley, and all the rest will, in our minds at least, go down as a new stage of maturity in television growth. Not that these programs are of universal excellence or that there is not room for improvement in quality and quantity. Some of them, in fact, have been pretty terrible. But where once we felt grateful for each of the few documentary programs begrudged us, we can for the first time afford the luxury of criticism and discriminating choice.

■ Ortega y Gasset's speech to librarians (page 133) was delivered before the days of television journalism, before the hey-day of microfilm and tape recordings, before the onslaught of the paperback flood. He was concerned with the growing mountain of published data and the impossibility of the single scholar to keep abreast of the knowledge in his field, let alone maintain himself as a citizen in the broader and deeper cultures of contemporary affairs and historical perspectives. The problem has certainly not diminshed since then, either in terms of the amount of published knowledge available or the necessity of the citizen of today's world to possess the tools of wisdom. New means of communication have merely added new dimensions to the problem.

We who are in the business of contributing to this river of print sometimes wonder, in our private moments, about this dilemma. We believe that human problems require human solutions, that the solutions require wisdom, that the best way to wisdom is through knowledge transmitted through language, a slippery medium at best, and that more language, more words, more viewpoints are necessary to tackle the more and more difficult problems facing us. But by adding to the flood of words, by adding to the range of choice, are we making wisdom more difficult instead of more promising? There are no easy answers, just as there is no easy wisdom, so we just keep on trying, and publishing, and hoping we are right.

■ Africa is one area about which a flood of knowledge *is* needed, and we feel no qualms about furthering this flood in our Fall issue. For the best understanding of today's acute growing pains of Africa and the Africans we turned to the anthropologists, and our next issue will be a "special" containing half a dozen pieces relating to the rapid changes which African cultures are undergoing. The issue is being edited by Abraham Rosman and will feature articles by Alan P.

(*Continued on page 256*)

The Mission of the Librarian

By JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET

Translated by James Lewis and Ray Carpenter

■ I would like to warn you initially that what you are about to read does not exactly coincide with the title given to my speech, a title which I encountered upon reading the program of this congress. I make this a matter of note, because this title—*The Mission of the Librarian*—is enormous and frightening, and simply to accept it would be extremely pretentious. I could not pretend to teach the complex techniques of librarianship which for me are hermetic mysteries.

Even the word "mission" frightens me a little if I find myself obliged to use it in its full significance. The same applies to innumerable words of which we make daily use. If they suddenly began to function in the fullness of their true meanings, if upon our pronouncing and hearing them our minds understood at once their essential meanings, we would be frightened in the presence of the basic dramas which they contain.

The Personal Mission

In order to demonstrate this with an example, it will be sufficient to look for a moment into the word "mission." Mission means, first of all, that which a man has to do with his life. Apparently, then,

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José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955), the well-known Spanish philosopher and political scientist, delivered this address to the International Congress of Bibliographers and Librarians in Paris in 1934. It was published as "Mission du Bibliotécaire" in *Archives et Bibliothèques* (No. 2, 1935) and as "Misión del Bibliotecario" in *Revista de Occidente* (v. 47-48, 1935). This first English version was translated and edited by James Lewis and Ray L. Carpenter of the School of Library Science, University of North Carolina.

mission is something exclusive to man. Without man there is no mission. But the necessity expressed by the words "have to do" is a very strange condition and does not at all resemble the compulsion by which the stone gravitates towards the center of the earth. The stone cannot refuse to fall, but a man might very well not do that which he "has to do." Is this not curious? Here "necessity" is a thing most opposed to constraint—it is rather an invitation. Could anything be more gallant? Man finds himself invited to lend his consent to necessity. A stone, were it half-intelligent, might say upon observing this, "What good fortune to be a man! I have no choice but to fulfill my inexorable law: I must always fall. But what a man has to do or has to be is not imposed upon him, but proposed to him." But this imaginary stone would think thus because it was only half-intelligent. If it were completely so, it would see that this privilege of man's is a terrifying one. For it implies that at every moment of his life a man finds himself facing the various possibilities of acting and being, and that it is he alone who, consulting his unique responsibility, must decide in favor of one of them; that in order to decide to do this and not that, he must, whether he wishes to or not, justify the choice in his own eyes. That is, he must discover among the actions possible at that moment the one that possesses the most meaning, the one that is most his own. If he does not choose that one, he knows that he has deceived himself, falsified his own reality, and annihilated a moment of his vital time. There is no mysticism in what I say: it is evident that one cannot take a single step without justifying it before his own intimate tribunal. And so each of our acts must be drawn from the total anticipation of our destiny, the general program of our existence. This is true not only of the honest and heroic man, but also of the perverse and wicked. For the wicked man, too, is obliged to justify his acts in his own eyes and to find for them a meaning and a role in some program of life. Otherwise he would remain motionless, paralyzed like Buridan's ass.

Among the few papers that Descartes left after his death there was one written when he was twenty in which we read: *"Quod vitae sectabor iter?"* What way shall I choose in my life? This is a quotation taken from a verse of Ausonius, who in turn was translating an old Pythagorean poem entitled *De ambiguitate eligendae vitae*—concerning the perplexity in the choice of life.

Apparently man receives the inescapable impression that his life, and consequently his being, is something that he must choose. This is a stupefying fact, for it means that man—differing from all other entities of the universe which have their beings fixed in advance and exist precisely because of that—man is the unique and almost inconceivable reality who exists without having his being irremediably prefixed, who is not from the beginning what he is, who must choose his own being. And how shall he choose it? While calling to mind and considering the various kinds of life possible to him, a man observes that one of them attracts him more than the others—draws him, claims him, calls to him. This appeal that a certain kind of life has for us, this imperative cry, is called vocation.

In vocation, what is necessary for a man to do is not imposed upon him, but proposed to him. That is why life takes on the character of the realization of an imperative. It depends upon us to wish or not to wish to realize it, to be faithful or unfaithful to our vocation. But the vocation itself is not in our hands. That is why every human life has a mission. A mission is just this: the consciousness that every man has of his most authentic being, of that which he is called upon to realize. The idea of mission is, therefore, a constitutive ingredient of the human condition; and as I said a while ago, without man there is no mission. We may now add that without mission there is no man.

The Professional Mission

It is too bad that we cannot now go deeply into this subject, one of the gravest and most fertile that exists: that of the relationship between man and his duty. For life is, before anything, something to do, a task. We do not give life to ourselves, life has been given to us. We encounter ourselves in its midst without knowing how or why. But that which has been given to us—life—now reveals itself as something we must make for ourselves, each man his own. In other words, to live we must always do something, under penalty of dying. Yes, life is a task; it gives us much to do, and the most important matter is to strike upon what is necessary to do. To this purpose we look around us at our social environment, and we find that it is made of a tissue of typical lives, lives that have certain gen-

eral lines in common: we find doctors, engineers, professors, physicists, philosophers, laborers, manufacturers, salesmen, soldiers, masons, cobblers, teachers, actresses, dancers, nuns, dressmakers, ladies of society. At first we do not see the individual life of each doctor and each actress, but only the generic and schematic architecture of each life. The lives differ one from the other by the predominance of a type of work—for example, what the soldier does and what the scholar does. These schematic trajectories of life are the professions, careers, or beaten tracks of existence that we find already established, defined, and regulated in our society. We then choose from among them the one that will be our own, our *curriculum vitae.*

This has happened to you also. At that moment when a man makes his most decisive resolutions more or less clearly, you have found in your social environment, outlined before your arrival, the way of life and the mode of being human which is that of a librarian. You did not have to invent it: it was already there, in the society to which you belong.

At this point we must go a little more slowly. I have just said that the way of life and the type of human task that is the librarian's existed before any of you, that it sufficed for you to look around you to find it, already representing the lives of many men and women. But this has not always been true. There have been epochs in which there were no librarians, although there were books—not to speak of those other long epochs when there were no librarians because there were no books. Does this mean that in those times when there were no librarians, although there were books, no men existed who occupied themselves with books in a way quite similar to that which constitutes your profession today? Undoubtedly there were people who were not content merely to read books, but who collected, arranged, and catalogued them, who took care of them. But had you been born in one of those times you would have looked around yourselves in vain, you would not have recognized in what these people did what we today call librarianship. Their conduct would have seemed to you what in fact it was—a singular, altogether personal mode of conduct, an individual trait, like the sound of one's voice or the harmony of his gestures. The proof of this is that at the death of these individuals, their occupation died with them, was not practiced above and beyond the individual lives which exercised it.

What I mean to imply here will become quite clear if we go to the other extremity of the development and ask ourselves: what happens today when a man who governs a public library dies? He leaves an empty place behind him; his occupation continues intact in the form of an official post which the state, the community, or some such corporation sustains by their collective will and power, even though it may be momentarily unoccupied and a salary continues to be assigned to this empty post. It follows that today the occupation of collecting, arranging, and cataloging books is no longer a purely individual pursuit but a post, a *topos,* a social position, independent of individuals, sustained, acclaimed, and decided by society as such, not simply by the occasional vocation of one person or another. That is why today we find the care of books impersonally established as a career or profession, and upon looking around us we see it clearly and solidly defined, like a public monument. Careers and professions are types of human tasks which society needs. One of these tasks has been, for some two centuries, that of the librarian. Every society of the West today needs a certain number of doctors, magistrates, soldiers, and librarians—to cure their citizens when sick, to administer justice to them, to defend them, and to make them read.

And now here is the same expression which I used a while ago, this time applied to society instead of to the individual man. For society, also, it is *necessary* to do certain things. It, too, has its system of necessities, of missions.

We find ourselves, then—and this is more important than perhaps one imagines—in the presence of a duality: the mission of the man, that which a man must do in order to be what he is, and the professional mission, in this case the librarian's mission, or what a librarian must do in order to be a good librarian. It is very important not to confuse the one with the other.

Originally all that which today constitutes a profession, trade, or office was the creative inspiration of a man who felt the radical need of dedicating his life to an occupation hitherto unknown, who invented a new task. His mission was that which was necessary to him. This man died and his mission died with him. But after a time the community decided that this occupation or something which resembled it was necessary in order that society subsist and

flourish. For example, there was once in Rome a man of the *gens Julia* whose name was Caius and whose surname was Caesar, and who had the idea of doing things no one had done before—among others, of proclaiming the right of Rome to the exclusive command of the world and the right of an individual to the exclusive command of Rome. This cost him his life. But a generation later Roman society felt, as a society, the need of someone doing again what Caius Julius Caesar had done. Thus it was that the void this man had left behind him, this empty design of his personal profile, found itself objectified, depersonalized into a magistracy, and the word "Caesar," which had designated an individual mission, came to designate a collective necessity. But notice the profound transformation which a type of human task undergoes when, instead of a personal necessity or mission, it becomes a collective necessity, an office or profession. In the first case, a man does what he and he alone must do, freely, and according to his exclusive responsibility. On the other hand, when this man practices a profession he engages himself to the needs of society. He then has to renounce a good part of his liberty; he finds himself obliged to set aside his individuality. He cannot determine his actions exclusively according to his personal point of view, but according to a collective one, under pain of being a bad professional and of suffering the grave consequences that society, which is very cruel, imposes upon those who serve it badly.

Perhaps an example will clarify what I imply here. If a fire breaks out in a house where a man lives with a number of other people, he might, in the extremity of despair, content himself with the idea of his own body in cinders and make no effort to put out the fire. But if by chance he survives, and it is evident that he could have put out the fire that has cost so many lives, society will castigate him, because he has not done that which he ought to have done socially, that is to say for the collective, not the individual, necessity. The professions always represent this type of duty for those who practice them. Like the fire, they are inescapable urgencies which the social situation presents and which we must attend to, whether we wish to or not. That is why they are called *offices,* and all the duties of the state are especially qualified as *official*—for in the state society shows itself superlatively emphasized, sharply defined, one might say exaggerated.

Linguists encounter some difficulty in affixing the etymology of this word "official," a word by which the Latins designated duty. This is because, as often happens, they do not properly conceive the original, vital situation to which the word corresponds and in which it was created. But there is no semantic difficulty in recognizing that *officium* comes from *ob* and *facere*. The prefix *ob* generally means to go out promptly to encounter something, in this case a task. *Officium* means, then, to do without hesitation or delay the urgent duty, the task presented as inescapable.* Is this not what constitutes the very idea of society? When we are presented with something as a duty, it is made clear that we have no margin in which to decide for ourselves whether or not it ought to be done. We may do it or not, but the fact that it ought to be done is indisputable—for such is duty. All this tells us that in order to determine the mission of the librarian we must begin, not with the man who practices the profession, his tastes, peculiarities, and suitabilities, nor with an abstract ideal which presumes to define once and for always what a library is, but with the social necessity which your profession serves. And that necessity, like everything else that is properly human, does not consist of a fixed magnitude; on the contrary, by its very essence it is variable, migratory, evolutionary—in short, historical.

History of Librarianship: The 15th Century

If you will examine it now you will observe how clearly the duty of the librarian has varied in direct proportion to the significance of the book as a social necessity.

---

*The other meaning of *officium*—to place obstacles—though it seems to have a bellicose connotation, is related to the one already indicated. The urgent duty most characteristic of primitive life is the battle against the enemy, facing and opposing it. Thus it does not matter whether *officium* first means "to place obstacles" and later, by generalization, becomes the prototype of urgency, or whether, vice versa, duty in general becomes specialized to the more definite sense of opposition to the enemy.

It is a curious fact that the same idea of going promptly to some urgent duty also animates the word "obedience" which comes from *ob* and *audire*—that is to say, to immediately execute the order as soon as it is heard. In Arabic the expression which designates obedience is a combination of the two words "understood" and "done."

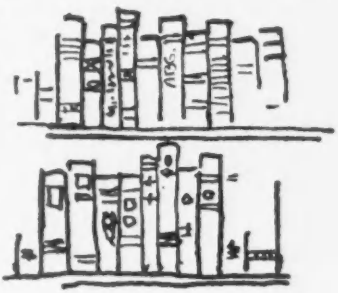
If it were possible to reconstruct the past exactly, we would discover with surprise that the history of librarianship shows us transparently the most secret intimacies of the evolution which the Occidental world has undergone. This would prove that we had envisioned the profession of the librarian, apparently so specialized and eccentric, in its effective and fundamental reality. When we envision anything whatever in its reality, no matter how diminutive and subordinate, it puts us in contact with all other realities, places us in the center of the world, and shows us in every direction the unlimited and pathetic perspectives of the universe. But, I repeat, we cannot even now begin that profound history of librarianship. That task remains for someone better gifted than I to undertake.

The functional relationship between what the librarian has done in each epoch and the significance of the book as a necessity among Occidental societies seems to me to be unquestionable.

For the sake of brevity, let us pass over Greece and Rome. That which was a book to them is a very strange thing to us, if described with precision. We shall speak only of the new populations who initiated a new growth upon the ruins of Greece and Rome. When, then, do we see the human figure of the librarian outlined for the first time against the social scene? When would a contemporary, in looking about him, have been able to find the silhouette of the librarian, a clearly defined public figure? Without doubt, at the beginning of the Renaissance. And take note, a little before printed books existed! During the Middle Ages the care of books was still infrasocial, not showing itself in public view; it was still latent, secret, one might say intestine, confined in the secret precincts of the cloisters. Even in the universities the practice was not outstanding. They no doubt kept the books necessary for the business of teaching, no more, no less, just as one keeps enough utensils for housekeeping. The guarding of books was not a special task. It was not until the dawn of the Renaissance that the pattern of the librarian's work distinguished itself from the other general ways of life and appeared

in public view. And—note this coincidence—it was just at this epoch also that for the first time the book, in the strict sense of the word—not the religious book nor the book of law, but the book written by an author, the book that is only a book, not a revelation or a code—it was just at this epoch that the book was first socially felt as a necessity. Long before this time, no doubt, one individual or another had felt this need of books, but more as a personal desire or pain, on his own account and at his own risk. At the time of which I speak the individual had already discovered that he need not experience this need by himself. He found it in the air, in the atmosphere, a thing recognized, one did not know exactly by whom; a need that seemed to be felt by "the others"—that vague collectivity, that mysterious substratum of all society. The attraction of the book, the hope invested in the book, already these had ceased to be the concern of one or another individual and possessed that anonymous and impersonal character that belongs to every collective validity. History is first of all the story of the emergence, development, and decadence of these social validities: opinions, norms, preferences, negations, and fears which individuals find already made in their social environment, and which they must take into account whether they wish to or not, just as they must take physical nature into account. It does not matter whether the individual is in accord with these validities, for the effective vigor which they enjoy does not depend upon whether you and I give them our assent; on the contrary, it is when our dissent comes in conflict with their granite hardness that we best understand to what point they are effectively in force.

In this sense, then, I say that up until the Renaissance the need of books did not constitute a social validity in full force. It became one at that time. And that is why we now see the librarian emerge immediately as a professional. But we may be still more precise. At this epoch the need for books took on the nuance of faith in books. The revelations that God had given to man lost their efficacy. People began to have faith in all that man thinks with his reason alone, and



consequently in all that man writes. What a strange and radical adventure for the Western world! And note how it sufficed for us merely to touch upon the history of librarianship in order to fall, as if through a trap-door, into the hidden depths of European evolution.

The social need for books consisted at that time merely of the need to have books—for there were few of them. In proportion to that need we see the corresponding growth of those librarians of genius who, during the Renaissance, deployed in the hunt for books unbelievable astuteness and tenacity. The compiling of catalogs was not yet an urgent affair. The acquisition and production of books, on the contrary, assumed heroic proportions. All this was in the fifteenth century.

It hardly seems due to pure chance that precisely in this epoch, when such a lively need for books was felt, printing was invented.

The Nineteenth Century

Let us leap over three centuries and find ourselves in 1800. What has happened to books in the meantime? Many have been published; printing is no longer expensive. One no longer feels the lack of books, but the need to catalog them, there are so many. So much for the material quantity of books. As for their contents, the needs felt by society have also changed. Much of the hope founded upon books seems to have been realized. There are some things in the world that were not there before: the sciences of nature and history and much technical knowledge. The search for books has ceased to be a problem; there is now the problem of finding and encouraging readers. Libraries multiply at this stage, and with them the librarians. The role of the librarian has become a profession which occupies many men; but it is still a spontaneous, social profession. The state has not yet made it an official one.

The decisive step in the evolution of librarianship was taken a little later, toward 1850. The profession as a state office is not very old, then, and this detail concerning its age is of very great importance. Because history, everything historical—that is, everything human—is time in motion, and time in motion always means age. It follows that everything human is either in its infancy, its youth, its maturity, or its senility.

I am a little afraid at having pointed out this perspective to you for I fear that you are going to ask me with great curiosity in what age I think the profession is, and whether to be a librarian is to be, historically, young, mature, or aged. We shall see at the end whether I am able to give you some answer to this question.

But let us come back to the point of evolution where we were, to the moment when, approximately a century ago, the profession of librarian became an official one. No doubt you think, as I do, that the most important incident in the history of a profession is its passing from an occupation spontaneously favored by society, to a bureaucracy of the state. What is the cause of such an important change? Or at least, of what is it always a symptom? The state is also society, but not all of it. It is only a mode, or a part of it. Society, inasmuch as it is not the state, operates by the means of usage, custom, public opinion, language, etc.—in short, by the means of imprecise and diffuse validities. In the state, on the other hand, the effective vigor of everything social is raised to its highest power and becomes, so to speak, something solid, perfectly clear and precise. The state operates by the means of laws, terribly imperative announcements of an almost mathematical rigor. That is why I said a moment ago that the order of the state is the extreme form of the collective order, the superlative of the social. If we apply this to our present problem, we shall find that a profession does not become official and pass into the hands of the state until that moment when the collective need which it serves becomes extremely sharp and is no longer felt as a simple need but as an inescapable necessity, an urgency. The state does not admit superfluous occupations in its own orbit. Society feels at every moment that it has many things to do, but the state is careful to intervene only in those which apparently must be done. There was a time when the consultation of the auspices and other mysterious signs that the gods sent to their people were believed to be indispensable to the existence of society. That is why the ceremony of augury became an institution and an official duty, and the augurs and diviners formed an important bureaucracy.

The French Revolution, after its turbulent melodrama, had transformed European society. A so-called democratic body had succeeded the old aristocratic body. This society was the final consequence of the faith in books which had been felt in the Renaissance. Democratic society is a daughter of books, the triumph of the book

written by man over the book revealed by God, over the book of laws dictated by the autocracy. The revolt of the people had been accomplished in the name of all the things that we call reason, culture, etc. These abstract entities came to occupy in men's hearts the same central position formerly occupied by God, an entity no less abstract. There is always a strange propensity in man to nourish himself, above all, in the abstract.

The fact is that toward 1840 books were no longer a necessity in the sense of an illusion or a hope, but God having departed and the traditional authority of divine right having evaporated, there remained no more ultimate appeal than the book on which to found all that was social. It was therefore necessary to take refuge in the book as in a rock of salvation. The book became socially indispensable. This was the era in which appeared the phenomenon of copious editions. The masses threw themselves upon the volumes with an almost breathless urgency, as though books were balloons of oxygen. The consequence was that for the first time in Western history culture became a *raggione di stato*. The state made science and letters official. It recognized the book as a public function and as an essential political organism. By virtue of this, the profession of the librarian became a bureaucracy for reasons of state.*

We have come, then, in the process of history, in the process of the human life of Europe, to the phase in which the book has become an indispensable necessity. Without the sciences, without the technologies, these societies so dense in poulation and of such a high standard of living could not have materially existed. Still less could they have lived morally without a vast repertory of ideas. There was only one vague possibility of making democracy effective: that the masses cease to be masses by dint of gulping enormous doses of culture, an effective culture, be it understood, germinating in each man, not merely received, heard, or read. The nineteenth century understood this from its beginning with perfect clarity. It is an error to believe that this century could have tried democracy without taking into account *a priori* that the enterprise was very improbable. It saw perfectly what had to be done—re-read St.-Simon, Auguste

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*The same process created the mandarins in China when there was no god nor any strong commandments.

Comte, Tocqueville, and Macaulay. It tried to do it. However, it is important to recognize that it tried at first feebly and later frivolously.

But let us leave this now and go to what is more important to us. We have come to a point that is going to demand the most alert effort of attention, because the theme of the book and the librarian which up until this point has been sustained with an almost idyllic mildness is going to be suddenly transformed into a drama. And this drama, in my opinion, is going to constitute the most authentic mission of the librarian. Until now we have only considered what that mission has been; we have seen only the images of its past. Now the profile of a new task is going to rise before your eyes, a task incomparably higher, graver, more essential. One might say that until now the profession has lived only its hours of play and prelude—*Tanze und Vorspiel*. But now the serious part arrives, for the drama begins.

The New Mission

Until the middle of the nineteenth century our Western societies felt that the book was a need, but this need bore a positive sign. I shall clarify briefly what I mean by this expression.

This life that we encounter, that has been given to us, has not been given to us ready-made. We must make it for ourselves. This means that life consists of a series of difficulties that must be resolved. Some are physical, securing nourishment, for example; others are called spiritual, such as not dying of boredom. Faced with these difficulties, man reacts by inventing physical and spiritual instruments which facilitate his struggle against them. The sum of these facilities which man thus creates is culture. The ideas that we forge for ourselves concerning things constitute the best example of that arsenal of instruments which we interpose between ourselves and the difficulties around us. A clear idea about a problem is like some marvelous apparatus which transforms the painful difficulty into a comfortable facility. But ideas are fleeting; for a moment they illuminate our minds with magic clarity, but a moment after, that light is extinguished. Memory must make an effort to conserve them, but memory is not even able to conserve our own ideas, and it is extremely important to conserve those of other men. It is so impor-

tant, that this is one of the most characteristic traits of our human condition. The tiger today must remain the same tiger as if there had never been any other tigers before him; he does not profit from the thousands of experiences that other tigers have had in the sonorous depths of the forests. Each tiger is therefore a first tiger; he must start again from the beginning his profession of tiger. But the man of today does not begin by being a man. He inherits the forms of existence, the ideas, the vital experiences of his ancestors. He begins at a level represented by the human past accumulated beneath his feet. Faced with no matter what problem, man does not find himself alone with his personal reaction, with whatever idea occurs to him, but has at his disposal all or many of the ideas, reactions, and inventions which his ancestors have already found. That is why his life is made up of the accumulation of other lives and why his life is substantially a progress. We will not discuss here whether he progresses toward the better, toward the worse, or toward nothing at all.

It must be of singular importance, then, to add to this instrument, the idea, another instrument which solves the difficulty of preserving all the ideas. That instrument is the book. Inevitably, the more one accumulates of the past, the greater is the progress. And thus it has happened that scarcely had the technical problem of having books been resolved by the means of printing, than the movement of history and the speed of progress began to accelerate, attaining today a rhythm that seems to us vertiginous. What would the men of more leisurely ages have thought of it? For it is not only a matter of our machines which produce things at stupefying speeds, nor of our vehicles which transport our bodies with an almost mythological celerity; it is a matter of the total reality which is our life, of the composite volume of history which has prodigiously augmented the frequency of its mutations and consequently its absolute movement, its progress. And all this is principally due to the facility which the book represents.

Here is why our societies have felt the book as a necessity; it was the necessity of a facility, of a beneficial instrument. But imagine the instrument invented by man to render a dimension of existence easier, transforming itself into a new difficulty. Imagine this instrument turning against man, becoming uncontrollable and provoking morbid and unforeseen consequences. It will remain no less neces-

sary, in the sense of facilitating the problem in view of which it was invented. But without ceasing to be necessary, and exactly because it is so necessary for this problem, it will add a new and unexpected anguish to our lives. Formerly it was a pure facility for us, and consequently represented in our lives a factor with a positive sign. Now its relationship with us becomes complicated, and it is charged with a negative sign.

This case is not purely hypothetical. Everything that man invents and creates to facilitate his life, everything that we call civilization and culture, reaches a point at which it turns against him. Precisely because it is a creation, it remains in the world, outside of the subject which created it. It enjoys its own existence, transforms itself into a thing, into a world which confronts man, and, thrust toward its own inexorable destiny, it becomes detached from the intention with which man had created it in order to escape from an occasional difficulty. This is the inconvenience of being a creator. This also happened to the god of Christianity: he created the angel with great mystical wings, and the angel revolted against him. He created man with no wings but the wings of imagination, but man also rebelled, revolted against him, and began to cause him difficulties. Cardinal Cusano said that man, being free, is a creator, but that he is free and a creator in the temporal instant, under the pressure of circumstance; for that reason he deserves the title of *Deus occasionatus*, a second-hand god. For that reason also, his creations turn against him. Today we live in an age extremely characteristic of this tragic situation. Economy, technology, all the facilities that man has invented today besiege him and threaten to strangle him. The sciences which have grown so fabulously, multiplying and specializing themselves, surpass the capacities of acquisition which man possesses. They torture and oppress him like the plagues of nature. Man is in danger of becoming the slave of his sciences. Study is no longer the *Otium* and the *Schole* as in Greece. Study is already beginning to inundate the life of man and to overflow its limits. The inversion characteristic of this revolt of human creations against their creator is already imminent. Man, instead of studying in order to live, soon must live in order to study.

Under one form or another, this has already happened several times in history. Man loses himself in his own wealth: his own cul-

ture, proliferating like tropical vegetation around him, ends by smothering him. What we call the historical crises are finally nothing but this. Man cannot be too rich; if an excess of facilities and possibilities are offered for his choice, he comes to grief among them; and confounded with possibilities, he loses the sense of the necessary.*

This has been the perennial tragic destiny of the aristocracies: all of them finally degenerated because the excess of means and facilities atrophied their energies.

Are we going too far when we invite ourselves to reflect and ask ourselves whether Western societies are not already beginning to feel the book as an instrument in revolt, as a new difficulty? In Germany they are reading the book of Mr. Juenger in which one encounters sentences approximately like this: "It is a shame that we have come to this stage in our history without a sufficient number of illiterate people." You will tell me, perhaps, that this is an exaggeration. But let us not deceive ourselves. An exaggeration is always the extreme statement of something that is not in itself an exaggeration.

In all of Europe there exists the impression that there are too many books. It is the opposite of the Renaissance. The book has ceased to be an attraction and is felt instead as a heavy load. The man of science himself observes that one of the great difficulties of his work is to orient himself in the bibliography of his subject.

Let us not forget that always when an instrument created by man revolts against him, society in turn revolts against that creation, doubts its efficacy, feels an antipathy for it, and demands that it fulfill its primitive mission of pure facility.

Here then is the drama: the book is indispensable at this stage in history, but the book is in danger because it has become a danger for man.

One might say that a human need ceases to be purely positive and begins to charge itself with negativity at the very moment when it begins to seem indispensable. Every human need, if it really is

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*Chateaubriand, who had much more talent and profundity than is recognized by the ignorant literary criticism of the past eighty years, has already said, "The invasion of ideas has succeeded the invasion of the barbarians; today's civilization, decomposing, is losing itself in itself." *Memoires d'outre-tombe*, Ed. Bire, VI, 450.

one, may in a sense be qualified as indispensable. This is obvious. But if we intend to obtain a clear concept of a need or necessity we immediately discover a double significance which must be given to the term "indispensable." I cannot go into the subject deeply at this moment, and I shall limit myself to transcribing a few lines from a course on "The Principles of Metaphysics" which I gave in 1933 at the University of Madrid, some parts of which have been published:

> I call human need all that which is felt as literally indispensable—that is, that which we believe we cannot live without—or rather that which, even though in fact we could do without it, continues to be felt by us as a void or defect in our lives. Thus, eating is a literally indispensable need. But being happy, and being so in a certain and precise manner, is also a need. No doubt we are not happy, and that is to say in fact that we do without happiness and live unhappily. But—and here is the point—the feeling of the need for happiness continues to be still active within us. Then one may object that being happy is not a need, it is a mere desire. In fact it is, but this reveals to us that so many of our desires are only desires, and consequently things that we can completely forego, and without this renunciation leaving any amputation or emptiness in our lives. There are other desires which *as desires* we cannot do without, and that is to say that although we may be forced to renounce their satisfaction in the reality which they desire, we still cannot stop desiring even if we want to. That is why they demand to be called needs.

It is not good, in fact, for a thing to be vigorously indispensable even if we possess that thing in abundance, and even if its use and profit do not cost us any new difficulty. The sole characteristic of indispensability makes us feel enslaved by it. In this sense one may say that social needs become properly affairs of the state when they have already become negative. That is why everything that concerns the state is sad and painful and there is no means of completely freeing it of its aspects of a hospital, a barracks, or a prison.

Nevertheless, the fully negative character surges up when an instrument created as a facility spontaneously provokes an unforeseen difficulty and aggressively turns upon man. This is what is beginning to happen today with the book, and what has caused to disappear almost completely throughout Europe the ancient joy with which the printed page was welcomed.

All of this indicates to me that librarianship is entering its maturity. If life is a task, it follows that the different ages of life are

distinguished by different styles in the activity of man. Youth generally does not do what it does because it ought to do it, because it considers it inexcusable not to do it. On the contrary, as soon as youth observes that a thing is necessary, indispensable, it tries to avoid it, and if it does not succeed, carries out its task in sadness and disgust. The lack of logic implied in this attitude belongs to that magnificent treasure of absurdity of which youth happily consists. The young man embarks with enthusiasm only upon tasks which are presented to him as revokable, in which there is no restraint, and which can be perfectly replaced by others no less opportune and laudable. The young man needs to think that at any moment, if he so wishes, he can abandon the task and jump to another one. He thus avoids the feeling that he is a prisoner of a single task. In short, the young man is not bound to what he does; or equally, though he fulfills it carefully and even heroically, he almost never takes his task with complete seriousness. In the secret depth of his soul he refuses any irrevocable engagement and prefers to conserve a permanent freedom to do something else, even the opposite of what he is doing. Thus, his concrete occupation appears to him as a simple example of innumerable other tasks to which he may at any moment dedicate himself. Thanks to this private ruse he virtually obtains his ambition: to do everything at once, to enjoy at one time all the modes of being human. There is no use to try to deny it—the young man is essentially disloyal to himself; he plays with his mission as a toreador plays with a bull. His activity retains something of the games of childhood, it is almost always a mere experiment, a test, a pattern of no value.

The age of maturity conducts itself in the opposite fashion. It feels the fruition of reality, and reality in a duty is exactly the opposite of caprice. It is that which one cannot either do or not do with complete indifference; it is that which seems inexcusable and urgent. At this age life arrives at its own truth and discovers this essential platitude: that one life cannot live all lives, but on the contrary each life consists of "unliving" all others and remaining alone with itself. This vivid consciousness of not being able to be or to do but one thing at a time purifies our demands of what that thing shall be. We then feel a repugnance for that juvenile narcissism which *does* no matter what, precisely because it *doesn't* matter what, and which

nevertheless believes in its vanity that it is doing something. For the mature the only thing worth doing is that which is useless to avoid because it is inevitable; hence its preference for the problems which are problems in the superlative, that is to say problems which have become conflicts, necessities with a negative sign.

If we translate these distinctions between the ages in personal life into terms of collective life and of the professions, we shall discover that librarianship has reached the point where it must confront the problem of the book as a species of conflict.

Here, then, is the point at which I see the new mission of the librarian rise up incomparably higher than all those preceding. Up until the present, the librarian has been principally occupied with the book as a thing, as a material object. From now on he must give his attention to the book as a living function. He must become a policeman, master of the raging book.

The Book as a Conflict

The gravest negative attributes that we begin to perceive today in the book are the following:

1. There are already too many books. Even when we drastically reduce the number of subjects to which man must direct his attention, the quantity of books that he must absorb is so enormous that it exceeds the limits of his time and his capacity of assimilation. Merely the work of orienting oneself in the bibliography of a subject today represents a considerable effort for an author and proves to be a total loss. For once he has completed that part of his work, the author discovers that he cannot read all that he ought to read. This leads him to read too fast and to read badly; it moreover leaves him with an impression of powerlessness and failure, and finally skepticism towards his own work.

If each new generation continues to accumulate printed paper in the same proportion as the last few generations, the problem posed by the excess of books will become truly terrifying. The culture which has liberated man from the primitive forest now thrusts him anew into the midst of a forest of books no less inextricable and stifling.

It would be useless to wish to resolve the conflict by supposing

that the need to read the books accumulated in the past does not exist and that it is a matter of one of those innumerable commonplaces, empty of sense, invented by that bigotry of "culture" which was still in force in some minds a few years ago. The truth is just the opposite. Under the surface of our epoch there is already germinating, though some individuals have not yet perceived it, a new and radical imperative for the intelligence: the imperative of historical consciousness. The following conviction will soon arise with forceful evidence: that if man truly wishes to enlighten his being and his destiny he must attain to an historical consciousness of himself. That is to say, he must seriously begin to do with history that which toward 1600 he seriously began to do with physics, and that history will not be the Utopia of science which it has been until now, but an effective knowledge. In order that it may be such, many exquisite ingredients are necessary. One of these, the most obvious, is precision. This attribute of precision is a formal and extrinsic element of the first stages of a science when that science reaches the moment of its authentic constitution. The history that is to be made tomorrow will no longer speak so lightly of epochs and centuries. It will articulate the past into very brief stages of organic character, into generations, and it will try to define quite rigorously the structure of human life in each one of these stages. For this purpose it will not be content to emphasize one or two works which are arbitrarily qualified as "representative." It will be necessary to read really and effectively all the books of a determined time, to register the description of them most carefully, finally establishing what I would call a "statistics of ideas" in order to determine strictly the chronological moment at which an idea germinated, the process of its expansion, its exact duration as a collective validity, and then the hour of its decline, of its petrifaction as a simple commonplace, and finally its disappearance behind the horizon of historic time.

This enormous task can never be accomplished unless the librarian makes every effort to reduce the difficulty in the measure in which it is incumbent upon him, freeing from useless efforts the men whose sad mission is, and must be, to read many books, as many books as possible—the naturalist, the doctor, the philologist, the historian. It is necessary that the collection of descriptive and selective bibliography upon a given subject cease to be a problem for an author.

That this has not already come to pass today seems incompatible with the accomplishment of our times. The economy of mental effort demands it urgently. It is necessary, then, to create a new bibliographic technique, one of vigorous automatic action. This technique will raise to its highest power the labor begun by librarians some centuries ago in the forms of catalogs.

2. But it is not only that there are too many books; they are being produced every day in torrential abundance. Many of them are useless and stupid; their existence and their conservation is a dead weight upon humanity which is already bent low under other loads. At the same time, it also happens that in all the disciplines one often regrets the absence of certain books, the lack of which holds up research. This fact is much more serious than the vague pronouncement leads one to suppose. It is incalculable how many important solutions upon the most diverse subjects never come to maturity because they encounter lacunae in previous research. The excess and the lack of books are of the same origin: production is carried on without regimen, almost completely abandoned to spontaneous chance.

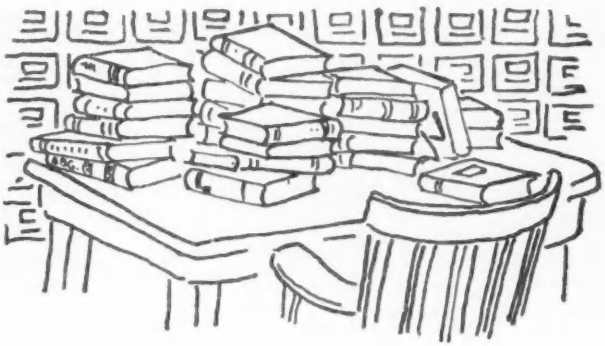
Is it too Utopian to imagine in a not too distant future librarians held responsible by society for the regulation of the production of books, in order to avoid the publication of superfluous ones and, on the other hand, to guard against the lack of those demanded by the complex of vital problems in every age? All human tasks begin in a spontaneous and unregulated exercise; but also, when through their own extension they complicate and impinge upon one another, they come to submit to organization. It seems to me that the hour has arrived for the collective organization of book production; for the book itself, as a human modality, this organization is a question of life or death.

And let no one offer me the foolish objection that such an organization would be an attack upon liberty. Liberty has not come upon the face of the earth to wring the neck of common sense. It is precisely because some have wished to employ it in such an enterprise, because they have pretended to make of it the chief instrument of madness, that liberty is having a bad time in the world at present. The collective organization of book production has nothing to do with the subject of liberty, no more nor less than the need which

has demanded the regulation of traffic in the great cities of today. Moreover, this organization would not be of an authoritarian character, no more in fact, than the internal organization of works in a good academy of sciences.

3. Furthermore, the librarian of the future must direct the non-specialized reader through the *selva selvaggia* of books. He will be the doctor and the hygienist of reading. On this point also we find ourselves in a situation quite the reverse of that in 1800. Today people read too much. The condition of receiving without much effort, or even without any effort, the innumerable ideas contained in books and periodicals has accustomed the common man to do no thinking on his own account; and he does not think over what he has read, the only method of making it truly his own. In addition, there is that gravest and most radically negative character of the book, and we must dedicate our utmost effort of attention to it. A large part of today's terrible public problem proceeds from the fact that ordinary minds are full of ideas received in inertia, ideas half understood and deprived of their virtues. Ordinary minds are thus stuffed with pseudo-ideas. In this aspect of his profession, I imagine the librarian of the future as a filter interposed between man and the torrent of books.

In summation, to my mind the mission of the librarian ought to be, not as it is today the simple administration of the things called books, but the adjustment, the setting to rights, of that vital function which is the book.



New Forces in an Old Culture

By WINSTON L. KING

■ Burmese Buddhist culture is an old one. Not quite in the sense of the millennial antiquity of Indian and Chinese cultures, but in the sense that it has been relatively unchanging for the past thousand years or so. This is the result primarily of Burma's geographical isolation and her small size. Cut off by mountain and jungle from India and Tibet, largely inaccessible from China, or simply too far away across country districts from the center of Chinese power and culture to be much influenced thereby, Burma has remained a corner apart. Hindu influence swept down past Burma on to Ceylon, Thailand, and Indonesia, leaving her largely unaffected. It is true that Buddhism came from India more than fifteen hundred years ago, but about a thousand years ago Burma adopted that conservative variety centering in Ceylon and since that time has taken great pride in maintaining this original heritage pure and undefiled from change. Thus the Burmese pattern of social, economic, cultural, and religious life has remained largely undisturbed, thinking its own thoughts in its own terms and going its own ways for that same period, affected only in minor fashion even by the British incursion about one hundred and twenty-five years ago.

In our day, however, this cultural isolation of nearly a thousand years is being rapidly broken down by the political, economic, and

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social forces with which Burma has been brought into face-to-face contact consequent upon her independence in 1948. One response to this new situation, the most immediate and instinctive, has been the appearance of a vigorous nationalism. This nationalism is partly ashamed and defensive, and partly assertive of the superior quality of the national tradition in all its forms to alternative values and customs (or at least of its peculiar fitness for Burma). The concrete result is a strong emphasis upon things native to the country—customs, language, dress, culture, its own history, and the Buddhist tradition. A recently established ministry of culture seeks to revive some knowledge of the ancient arts and to investigate Burma's past by archeological research. One might say that Burma, up till recently almost totally unaware that she had a past, is now searching it out with some enthusiasm and stands ready to discourse about it (with pardonable pride) to all who will listen.

But there is also a second force moving in Asian countries which sometimes counteracts or at least complicates this nationalism. This is what we may call modernity, meaning by that the potent forces of contemporary world politics, world economics, and scientific technology. All this has been slow in coming to Burma. It is true that the British came in the nineteenth century and introduced the railroad, the telegraph, some "modern" plumbing—which is still working (as well as it ever did)—and a new system of education, but not much besides. For her own welfare, and the purely incidental profit of British industries, Burma along with India was kept in a kind of economic protective custody, largely unspoiled by modern technology and industrialization. What now happens to Burma? One might say that modernity like a massive tidal wave has rushed in upon a primitive nation and culture all within a decade or two; a small nation, predominantly peasant and agricultural, in the process of self-discovery, inexperienced in politics and economics, must suddenly, with independence, take its place in a world of the fiercest political and economic competition, stand upon its own feet and make its own way in that world.

The shakings, the strains, and the tensions resulting from this encounter are felt in every part of the national life. But it is most especially with regard to what is happening in the ancient Buddhist tradition that I wish to speak here. Burma's Buddhism is of the

Hinayana or Southern Buddhist variety, called Theravada or Way of the Elders, which steadfastly asserts the pristine purity and faithful transmission of all its doctrine and practices from the Buddha himself. What happens to such a tradition in our fast-moving contemporary world?

It may be rejected, and there are those in Burma who are doing this, who are trying to become as Western as possible in dress, thought, and action, believing that in this direction lies their own and their country's prosperity. And they are apologetic for, and secretly ashamed of, the backwardness of their own country, particularly when speaking to foreigners. But they are often uncomfortable among fellow Burmese. Those who go abroad to study, for example, and come back with a Western veneer of education, often find themselves lonely and isolated, neither Western nor Eastern. And even some of those educated in Burma itself sit very loosely to their own culture and religion, not being able to bring themselves and their education together in any meaningful synthesis. Indeed, it is a matter of great concern to the Buddhist leaders of Burma that so many of the younger generation, having had no education in the traditional but largely defunct monastery schools, are so separated from Buddhism.

But more characteristic is the opposite reaction, at least in the more vocal circles. This tends to be a flat reassertion and glorification of the ancient tradition, without change if possible. There is some nostalgic longing for a monarchy, especially when the monarch is thought of as the Patron of Religion and not as the rather ruthless despot he often tended to be in political fact. Some of this persuasion view with apprehension what a socialist government will do to religion. However, with or without a king (whose reinstatement, of course, is most unlikely) there is a longing to go back to things as they were before the British came—which for Upper Burma was not more than some eighty-five years ago. Indeed, for many of the peasants—aside from a new set of government officials, the occasional sight of automobiles and airplanes, and involvements with a new set of dacoits or raiders—life has not changed much since then, so that going back to the past in any sense (social, economic, religious) would be to remain largely the same.

Of all conservative forces in Burma, the *Sangha,* or order of

Buddhist monks, is perhaps the strongest. There are, some say, about 100,000 monks, plus many who temporarily take the robe. They are the guardians of the conservative tradition of Southern or Theradava Buddhism and as far as possible try to follow the ancient scriptural tradition in all their ways and works. Their vocation is to study, to meditate, to teach the layman, and to furnish him with a channel for achieving merit. They are highly honored and adequately supported, as a rule. It is they in great part who are now urging the re-establishment of the old monastery schools for children, the adoption of a Buddhist calendar rather than an English-Christian one, and the establishment of Buddhism as the state religion.

But there is still another pattern of reaction between the two extremes of rejection and reassertion. This is the attempt to meet the new challenges by adapting the tradition to meet them. This you will not find any Buddhist saying, of course; for with a Fundamentalist fervor he will insist that Buddhist truth is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Nonetheless, even under cover of the unchanging Word of the Buddha, changes *are* occurring.

These changes are of three types. One is what I shall call "activating the vocabulary of Buddhism"—to borrow a phrase from the gasoline merchants and toothpaste vendors of America. To the Westerner much of the vocabulary of Buddhism seems especially primitive, negative or static. For example, there is an earth-mountain cosmology reaching from the hells up to the heavens. So also the iron law of Karma governs one's destiny; the highest virtue is neutrality; the supreme goal of all human endeavor is, or should be, the achievement of Nirvana, or the going out, perhaps extinction, of individual existence and consciousness. How can such a pattern of thought and value deal with the new world that Buddhism faces? We may observe briefly what Buddhism is doing in these areas.

It is true that the traditional Buddhist view of terrestrial and celestial geography reminds one of the Hebrews' and Babylonians' in its primitive concreteness. There is a vast earth mountain (Mt. Meru) 84,000 leagues high. Under it are the hells of suffering, age-long but not eternal; around it, beyond the seventh mountain ring in the eighth sea, are the earth-islands on which we live; on its sides, its summit, and on into space above it are the planes of supra-human existence, where live the god-like good men passed on to their

reward for millions of human years. And undoubtedly many a Burmese peasant, if he knows anything about Buddhism, believes all this, literally. Yet there are those today who will rather cautiously venture—though it can scarcely be said aloud—that Mt. Meru *may* be a kind of fourth dimensional mountain not perceptible to the ordinary intelligence; or that it is perhaps figurative rather than literal.

But there is also another conception of the universe, more inclusive and fundamental to Buddhism than this one, likewise more dynamic. It is the universe of change. Mt. Meru, if there be one, is only a name for this particular, presently existing, universe. But universes come and go. There have been millions in the past; there will be millions more in the future. Change is after all the fundamental reality. Thus Mt. Merus are ground up to bits periodically, and the universe becomes a void again before re-forming. It is this dynamic change which modern Buddhists most frequently emphasize, and which they assert is in accord with the view of contemporary physics with regard to the nature of the physical universe.

What of that ancient and honorable Buddhist institution of Karma? Karma, of course, means deed. And the law of Karma means that deeds inexorably produce their consequences in the life of the doer; if not in this life, then the next one, or the next thousandth one. But sooner or later, inevitably. Therefore, what I now am—the parentage I achieved (for one gets the parents he deserves), the country in which I was born, my ugliness, stupidity, deformity, bad character, ill fortune, or my beauty, intellectual brilliance, physical dexterity, good character, and good fortune—is all the result of what I did in former existences, worlds without end.

This has traditionally been both an explanation of the problem of human inequalities—or the problem of evil, if you will—and a social depressant. If unexpected misfortune comes to you, which seemingly the you that is now alive does not deserve, then it is the result of the deeds of a previous you. But if every man *is,* and is receiving, what he deserves, why should I interfere with the course of another's misfortune—save perhaps that a merciful deed may produce a better rebirth for *me*? On the whole, then, the doctrine of Karma has been one of passivity rather than activity, of reconciliation to the *status quo* rather than the hope of its reform. One

can improve his status in the next life, but not dependably improve his present life, or the world in which it is lived.

But contemporary Buddhism rejects the suggestion often made by Westerners that the doctrine of Karma is one of pessimism—much as the Calvinist insisted that the doctrine of predestination should not inhibit vigorous action. The Buddhist says: "True it is that what I now am is the result of past Karma; to some extent the dice with which I play the game of this present life are unpredictably loaded. Yet actually the past has poured all its reality into this present moment which I now hold in my hand. Therefore, since the future is not yet, since there is no arbitrary God or malign fate that dictates an absolutely pre-determined destiny for me, and since I make my own future Karma by my own present actions, the power to determine my destiny lies completely within my own control. I can now produce good Karma for the future—which will inevitably have its good result. I am my own maker." And on this basis contemporary Buddhists speak almost exclusively of present Karma as the true Karma and as the power and opportunity to change present reality for the better.

What then happens to *upekkha,* or neutrality, that sum of all virtues, the highest level of moral excellence? How can this be activated? Let us note for a moment the traditional conception of neutrality and its place in the order of Buddhist moral virtues. There are the more active virtues present, to be sure, though on a somewhat lower level. There is *dana,* or the virtue of generosity. There is *metta* or loving kindness, much emphasized today and often spoken of as the Buddhist equivalent of Christian love. There is *karuna* or compassion. There is *mudita* or sympathetic joy, rejoicing in the joy of others. Yet by practicing these on the very highest level, or by transcending them, one comes to attain detached neutrality, i.e. *upekkha.* It appears to the outsider that this final level of attainment negates all that goes before, and that generosity, loving kindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy actually achieve their destruction by achieving their presumed perfection in neutrality. It will seem that the meditator, withdrawn into his private world of reality, with legs crossed, hands folded, and eyes half closed, is the perfectly realized embodiment of this neutrality. And perhaps this *was* the original Buddhist pattern.

But again there is to be found an activating interpretation. Equanimity, not neutrality, is today the preferred translation of the original word. The modern Buddhist emphatically denies that he means anything approaching neutrality by the term, certainly not indifference. And since in Buddhism, as elsewhere, the saints are rare, the equanimous saint even though he were indifferent would not be a hazard to society or destroy its motive power. But this aside, the Buddhist would say that rather than indifference he means balance, poise, unemotionalism, detachment of view. And if you, as an activist Westerner, take him to task for speaking of detachment, he may interpret it for you as "disinterestedness." Thus in exercising equanimity one should give himself to the public good, should fulfill his duties as head of a family, member of a community, or citizen of a nation, but detachedly, i.e. disinterestedly, without dangerous or fanatical emotionalism, without expecting personal reward or greatness, and with the public good supremely in mind. Equanimity or disinterest would hold one's compassion and loving kindness in controlled balance and avoid the extremes of sentimentalism and fanaticism.

Besides this, Buddhism, in common with most Indian religions, has great faith in the pervasive power of quietness and clarity of mind. It does not find the most effective power in the world to be strenuous physical activity or external manifestations, but quietly

radiated benevolence and good will. Perhaps most Buddhists do not take literally, or fully believe in, the power of naked, defenseless good will to turn back physical onslaughts—of which so many instances are to be found in their own scriptures—but they do take most seriously the generally great effectiveness of mind over matter, benevolence over malevolence, and love over hatred. They find themselves in greater accord with the Quakers than any other Christian group.

And what of Nirvana? Can it too be "activated?" That might seem impossible. For Nirvana is by definition a conceptual nullity. It cannot be described but only experienced. And its ultimate experience is fatal, so to speak; for as a further extension of equanimity, equanimity brought to perfection, Nirvana is often described as the total cessation of all existence—though equally the term nonexistence cannot be applied to it. It is a going out, i.e., a snuffing out, of the flame of desire—the destruction of all attachment to anything or anyone whatsoever. When achieved, it means the absolute end of all the infinitely long progression of births and deaths, i.e., continued existences in time and space. It is utterly beyond the ordinarily known, a completely other dimension from anything experienced by ordinary senses.

Yet Nirvana, too, is being activated to meet the new day. Or the new day is calling out its active potentialities. Sometimes in a curious, perverse, theistic way, unacknowledged, even hidden, Nirvana is spoken of as "coming down" into peoples' lives, somewhat as the grace of God in Christian theology. Or again there are those here and there who speak of a "Nirvanic society," or social ideal—one of peace, harmony, and disinterested living.

In short, Buddhism is being given a new look (just as Christianity has so often been given one) in terms of the new day now facing it. The scriptures are searched to find instances of the Buddha's active interest in earthly life, his prescriptions for the life of householders, i.e., non-monks, and his compassionate deeds. The moral virtues of Buddhism, so often stated negatively—non-hatred, non-greed, non-delusion—are given postive connotations. And while the quest for Nirvana is still the basic Buddhist quest, it is now emphasized that it may be pursued at the same time as ordinary goals—as we shall note in a moment.

More briefly, we may notice a second response to the new situation facing contemporary Buddhism: the layman is being up-graded religiously. Originally, in my opinion, Buddhism was only for the monks, or the homeless ones as they were called. The Buddhist way of salvation, the quest of Nirvana, was for them alone. To be sure, any layman so minded might leave the world for the brotherhood, but he had to leave it. Nirvana-questing was not possible in the lay life; only the quest for better rebirths in human or superhuman worlds. Thus the layman was a useful adjunct to the order, providing its support, learning its lower truths; but the elaborate and difficult technique of meditation, which alone leads to Nirvana, was solely the monk's prerogative.

Today the situation is changing, not radically, not rapidly, but changing nonetheless. Active Buddhist laymen tend to find the spiritual leadership of monks lacking with regard to practical guidance, no matter how much they may respect and revere them. And the strict observance of all the 227 major, and a few more minor, rules by the monks makes it difficult for them to mingle in active life. Said one layman to me, and a devout Buddhist he was, too: "It's almost impossible to hold a committee meeting with monks. Just when you get started they have to go off to their 10:30 a.m. meal." (This the monk can't afford to miss since nothing else but water and fruit juice is allowed him till the next morning.) Nor is he supposed to concern himself with or touch money. Therefore, as an active missionary for the faith, the monk has his limitations. It is the layman who must take up the task; and he *is*, to some extent at least, in publishing his books, his magazines, and organizing a World Buddhist Fellowship for the conversion of the world.

But more important is the layman's new status with regard to meditation. Some fifty years or so ago a monk in Burma became convinced that the traditional ways of seeking Nirvana were too slow and complicated. He could not believe that the Buddha had intended it this way. He sought out another monk, reputed to be a holy man. The latter referred him to a specific Buddhist scripture that emphasized a direct and simple method of meditational discipline through attention to the body—body-mindfulness it is called. The seeker went to work and perfected a method which, with variations, is being widely used in Burma today; and, this is the

important thing, not only by monks, but by laymen as well. That is, the layman is now fully admitted to the fellowship of Nirvana seekers. He, too, even in the midst of his worldly activities, may seek detachment and Nirvanic peace. This, of course, has not been officially ratified by any council, nor even much spoken of. But it is a fact. And I know of at least one layman, perhaps the only one, who acts as *guru* or meditation master at a meditation center.

Along with this there is developing a philosophy of the positive benefits of meditation for worldly work. The concentration or "one-pointedness" of mind learned during meditation is held to be transferable to mundane tasks; and the detachment also learned therein keeps one from building up emotionalized tensions and worries. Thus the meditator is also a more efficient businessman or government servant.

One final response of Buddhism to the new world it faces, and perhaps the most interesting of all, may yet be noted. This is the Buddhist attempt, or more properly the attempt of some Buddhists, to develop a social and political philosophy directly out of Buddhism. Most of these attempts are naive and tentative, sometimes in the extreme; but they are important because they represent a brand new trend in Buddhism. Aside from the notable King Asoka of India in the third century B.C., who was a Buddhist of sorts, there have been few deliberate attempts to provide or implement a Buddhist philosophy of society and government. This was because Buddhism is primarily an individualistic seeking for personal salvation in Nirvana, because the doctrine of Karma produced a kind of passive, fatalistic temper, and because Buddhism traditionally has not considered that the mundane world was either worthy or capable of genuine improvement. One must learn to rise above it and escape it, first psychologically and finally metaphysically.

But now there are attempts to articulate and implement a social-political philosophy. I have one mimeographed document which speaks of a Buddhist economic Middle Way. It will be a middle way between capitalism and communism, with, of course, the best features of both. It will give every man an even start, economically speaking, and then let his Karma take over from there to give him what he deserves, riches or poverty. A splinter political party calling itself the Buddhist Democratic Party wishes to apply the Buddhist scriptures

directly to the government of Burma, to create a kind of Buddhist Bible State. For instance, the income tax is to take no more than ten per cent of anyone's income because certain scriptures imply this to be the right amount.

Most interesting and also most difficult to assess is the Buddhist socialism of the present premier, the Honorable U Nu, whose party was swept back into power in a landslide victory in the election of February, 1960. U Nu's political education was Marxist, for which some of his opponents still reproach him. But he has become more recently a less radical variety of socialist, a Buddhist socialist to be exact, who concerned himself in his campaign speeches of 1959-60 with attempting a genuine synthesis of Buddhist and socialist philosophies. To state the matter in a nutshell, he holds socialism to be that socio-political ideology, form, and technique most suited to a contemporary expression of Buddhist values. He categorically rejects free-enterprise capitalism because it enthrones the spirit of unfettered competition, i.e., envy and greed, at the heart of the economic and social system of any nation which adopts it. Socialism, he believes, by reducing the extremes of poverty and wealth, will limit the power of envy and greed over the ordinary man. In a socialist society it would be easier to seek Nirvana.

Does this represent a viable socio-religious pattern for Burma? Or have we here only a nostalgic and romantic version of some supposedly perfect Burmese-Buddhist society of the past? Or an abortive attempt to synthesize Buddhist-socialist values in a world which will not let them come to birth? Perhaps socialism will crowd Buddhism out of the synthesis, actually if not ostensibly. What does seem immediately certain, however, is that under U Nu, Burma will experience a revival of the ancient Theravada Buddhist tradition, especially on the official level. But what seems almost equally certain is that contemporary world conditions will inevitably work important changes of some sort in the interpretation and practice of this ancient tradition even while the staunch orthodoxy of the new expression is being persistently asserted.

Buddhism and Politics in Burma

By FRED VON DER MEHDEN

■ Snouck Hurgronje, the great Dutch scholar on Islam, once wrote that "Every new period in the history of a civilization obliges a religious community to undertake a general revision of the contents of its treasury." This generalization applies especially to the religions of Asia which have been caught up in the conflict between foreign domination and the drive for independence. Foreign pressures have initiated in Asiatic societies a slow secularization; subsequently the national faiths have been losing some of their former omnipotence. Still a vital force in the traditional sections of society, religion constantly has been forced to accommodate itself to modern ways and thoughts in order to maintain a hold on the urbanized and Westernized groups within the nation. Politically, this has meant a loss of the power of religion; in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Middle East the modern political elite, in accepting Western ideologies and nationalism as guides to national policy, has tended to erode the influence of formerly powerful clerical groups.[1] Burma, as well, can be described as a nation in which religion is becoming isolated from political decision-making, but with far less determination than her neighbors.

Superficially, at least, Buddhism appears to affect every facet

[1]For a discussion of secularization in various areas, see G. Almond and J. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of Developing Areas*, Princeton University Press, 1960.

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of Burma's social and political life. Burma considers herself to be the standard-bearer of world Buddhism and most particularly of its traditionalist Hinayana division. U Nu, the country's religiously oriented Prime Minister, constantly proclaims Buddhism's role as unifier and reformer of the body politic at home and abroad. Since Hinayana Buddhism stresses the importance of the monk, every major village has its monastery and the saffron robes of the *pongyis* (monks) appear omnipresent. The foreign resident is alternately pleased and appalled at the number of religious holidays; the time spent in religious observances; the number of solicitations for the readornment of pagodas; the proportion of the national income devoted to religious alms; and, in toto, the foot-pounds of energy annually applied to the national but individualized effort to "gain merit."[2] The Government of Burma has taken an active part in international proselytizing and has aided in the calling of a world conference of Buddhists (the sixth in history) and the establishment of a Buddhist university on the outskirts of Rangoon. U Nu has carried his personal interest in Buddhism into his speeches and activities as an office-holder. His public orations are fascinating mixtures of vague Marxist thinking, Burmese folklore, political demagoguery, and sound advice, liberally sprinkled with Buddhist sayings and vulgar stories. Finally, victory in elections may hinge upon the candidate's image as a religious man even though the administration of his office after the election may only faintly reflect that image.

Conceding the danger of over-simplication, we can divide the history of Buddhism's relationship to politics into five periods: the pre-British monarchy; the early nationalist movement; from 1930 to the end of World War II; the time of Aung San's ascendency in the nationalist movement; and today. Burma's nationalists, laymen and monks, tend to look back upon monarchical Burma as a political system in which religion and the *sangha* (monkhood) played a vigorous role. They point to the existence of an intact Buddhist hierarchy, the formal obeisance of the monarch to the *sangha*, advice given by noted *sayadaws* (abbots) to the king, and the place of

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[2]One can gain merit by building pagodas, lighting candles or strewing flowers before images of the Buddha, going into meditation, feeding and clothing the monks.

Buddhism as the state religion. In reality, the *sangha* was not the continuously powerful force in pre-British Burma that it has been portrayed. At times of crisis, certain *pongyis* were active as mediators, envoys, or challengers to arbitrary royal authority, but as a rule the *sangha* was apolitical.[3] With the British conquest, even this power waned with the deterioration of *pongyi* control over education, the destruction of the single hierarchy that had given authority and cohesion to the *sangha*, and the separation of church and state.

Although the monks' image of their role in monarchical Burma did not completely coincide with reality, the loss of power under the British provided a strong stimulus to *sangha* participation in the nationalist movement. If any period can be called the high tide of *sangha* sharing in the political process, it was the 1920's. According to the reminiscences of living *pongyis* who were among the leaders of the politically articulate section of the *sangha*, approximately eighty per cent of their 60,000 to 80,000 colleagues took part in the nationalist movement.[4] Their activity took the form of a politically oriented national *sangha* association, politicians in *pongyi* robes such as U Ottuma, membership in nationalist organizations including a dominant role in the most radical ones, the So Thein General Council of Burmese Associations, the publication of newspapers and tracts, and advice given to politicians and the lay flock on political, economic, and social issues. The result was *pongyi* domination of a number of facets of the nationalist movement and an inevitable reaction to the interference of religious elements in secular affairs.

The period to the end of World War II brought a slow secularization of politics as the power of the monkhood as an organized force in the nationalist movement diminished. Instead of dominating

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[3]John F. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, 1959. Pp. 49-59.

[4]This estimate, supplied to the author in interviews, was probably somewhat exaggerated.

political life, religious personnel more often became the tools of the politicians. By the early 1930's, the *sangha* had divided between those who eschewed politics and those various fragments which supported individual politicians and their parties. One veteran of the pre-war Burmese government described five major *sangha* groups attached to politicians in a system of shifting alliances.[5] A number of examples of the use of religion for political advantage can be drawn from this period. During the 1938 Indo-Burmese riots (brought on partially by publicity given an anti-Buddhist tract by opponents of the Government) political groups used their private *pongyi* organizations to gain control of the riots. Again, one noted pre-war politician told the author that he always campaigned with *pongyis* by his side to lend a religious aura to his candidacy. During the war both the Japanese and Burma's wartime Prime Minister, Dr. Ba Maw, looked to the *pongyis* to strengthen their rule, the latter contending that "*Sanghas* make very good propagandists as all of us know." The fifteen years from 1930 to 1944 saw the final demise of major *pongyi* influence on the Burmese political process, and the next few years witnessed a displacement of Buddhism as the primary factor in the national ideology.

During the 1930's, there arose a new political group, the Thakins, an organization composed primarily of young university men who, with such rare exceptions as U Nu, were nationalists first and Buddhists second. The Thakins looked to a secular state in which all persons would have religious freedom and no one religion would be paramount. The leader of the group was General Aung San, a forceful young man who was to symbolize modern Burmese nationalism. Opposed to *sangha* interference in secular affairs and disgusted with the use of religion by the older politicians, he described his organization as "the only non-racial, non-religious, and impersonal movement that has ever existed in Burma." Though he was cut down by assassins in the months before the declaration of independence (January 4, 1948), his ideology lived on in the organization which he had done so much to found and which continued to rule Burma in the postwar years, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. His views appear in the original A.F.P.F.L. manifesto of

[5]Interview with U Ba Pe, April, 1960.

1944 which read, "Freedom of conscience should be established. The State should remain neutral on religious questions." This principle was carried through into the Constitution which guaranteed religious equality to all, though Buddhism was recognized as having a "special position" as the faith of the majority of the people. There was no Buddhist state as had been the hope of the early religious nationalists, and *pongyis* were prohibited from voting or holding political office. Thus independence brought no return to the monarchical relationship between religion and politics, and Burma's leadership reached a plainly secularist position.

Nevertheless, since the early 1950's there has been a certain falling away from this position. The reasons for this development center largely in the person of the martyred Aung San's successor, Prime Minister U Nu—a man described by one Asian observer as "unique amongst the world's statesmen by his unparalleled piety and the embodiment of the ideal of Rajarsi, the ruler who is also a sage." Nu is termed a religious man even by his enemies who, in fact, have at times blamed his overly fond interests in prayer, meditation, and religious questions for his weaknesses in administration. He has evidenced profound interest in furthering Buddhism and has used the machinery of the state to aid his cause. In his speeches he has referred to his delight in religious activities and has publicly prayed for the "Back to Religion" movement. Nu has called for increased religious activity to unite a country torn by civil strife, at one time professing that "If we go to the root causes of the present disorders in this country, we will find that not less than eighty per cent of them are due to apathy to religion." At another time he advanced the claim that "all activities directed towards the stability of the Union and the perpetuation of Independence are steps toward the propagation of the *Sasana* [religion]." Such statements find ready acceptance among the broad masses of the Burmese people.

Distinctions must be made in any current evaluations of the relation between Buddhism and politics. With rare exceptions, the Government has confined its official efforts to rationalizing and organizing the *sangha* and to propagating Buddhism in the world; its legislation has avoided all areas which might have brought charges of intolerance toward minority religions. For its part the

Buddhist clergy has limited its activity to election campaigns and has not normally sought to influence the daily activities of government.

The context within which legislation concerning religion has taken place is as follows: Buddhism has no official standing as a state religion; at the same time, there is no separation of church and state as exists in the United States. In 1949, a hierarchy of ecclesiastical courts was established. In 1950, a Ministry of Religion was formed, and Parliament passed an act setting up achievement examinations for the religious orders and a second act establishing a Pali university. In 1956, the Sixth World Buddhist Synod was held in Burma with government support and encouragement. Under U Nu, Burma has also tended to work for the propagation of Buddhism through the rebuilding of temples and monasteries, encouragement of international Buddhist exchanges, the use of Buddhism to regenerate criminals, and efforts to proselytize among Burma's hill peoples—all of these activities having at least the tacit approval of the government. At the same time, Nu has attempted to assuage the fears of minority religions as in his statement in 1951: "It is far from our intention to disparage in any way other religions like Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Christianity, or spirit worship. We have been prompted by the sole consideration to combat effectively anti-religious forces which are rearing their ugly heads everywhere." The impact of Nu's religious proclivities on non-Buddhists has taken only one form—the prohibition of the slaughter of cattle. Lifted during the months of the Caretaker Government under General Ne Win, the prohibition was reinstated in the first week of Nu's return to office in April, 1960. Nu explained the move on the economic ground that the cattle were needed to sustain agricultural production, but since many cattle could not earn their keep as draught animals and since an economic effect of the prohibition was to raise the cost of other foods, religion and not economics seemed Nu's true motivation.

A clear division has normally been made between the encouragement of the *sangha* to organize and proselytize and any interference of the *sangha* in the operations of the state. In this Nu has firmly maintained his wartime position about which he wrote in 1954:

> In my opinion a *pongyi* should be solely concerned with his religious discipline and duties. I could not stand their interfering in politics and other worldly affairs. I may be wrong but I firmly believe that men who lean on *pongyis* in politics are mere opportunists. . . .

Recent election campaigning illustrates another facet of the relationship between religion and politics. In 1958 the A.F.P.F.L., since independence the dominant party in Burmese politics, split asunder in a factional fight between U Nu and two of his lieutenants, U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein. In an effort to maintain a precarious majority, Nu made compromises with some of the erstwhile foes of the Government, the internal security of the country was presently threatened with widespread anarchy and insurgency, and to re-establish a viable regime, the Prime Minister called on General Ne Win to form an interim Caretaker Government under the military. The aims of the new government were to re-establish internal security, both political and economic, and to hold free and fair elections as soon as feasible. After seventeen months of the most effective public administration Burma had ever experienced, the Army, before retiring to the barracks, scheduled elections for February, 1960. Facing each other in the battle for control of the new civilian state were the two factions (which had split in 1958), the Clean A.F.P.F.L. led by U Nu and the Stable A.F.P.F.L.[6] under U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein. Aside from the major protagonists there were a number of minor parties, but the Clean and Stable factions dominated the election and its results.

According to Article 21, Section 4 of the Burma Constitution, "The abuse of religion for political purposes is forbidden; and any act which is intended or is likely to promote feelings of hatred, enmity or discord between racial or religious communities or sects is contrary to this Constitution and may be made punishable by law." Purportedly drawn up with the twin aims of alleviating religious tension in multi-faith Burma and hindering a return to pre-war religious politics, the article had been rarely exercised prior to the 1959-60 campaign. During previous elections the then united

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[6]Meaning of the terms "Clean" and "Stable" were quickly lost in the acrimony of the factional fight. Contributing to the confusion was the fact that one of the "Clean" leaders was prosecuted for malconduct in office.

A.F.P.F.L. had eschewed religion in its campaigns and religious groups had not been active in politics.

It was soon apparent that the new campaign would be different. On September 26, 1959, just prior to the official opening of the campaign, U Nu promised that if elected he would establish Buddhism as the state religion of Burma. Having brought up the religious issue, he retired to a monastery. The initial reaction of the Stable was to charge Nu with contempt for the Constitution, insincere use of religion for political ends, and violation of the previous stand of the A.F.P.F.L. that state Buddhism would divide the nation. These and other admonishments were made in speeches and a pamphlet entitled *Nainggandaw Batha Khy don* (Misuse of Religion).

Nu's reply was ingenious. He had not been unconstitutional because the question of a state religion had been broached several days before the campaign had officially opened and he personally had not discussed the issue after that (although some of his colleagues had no such inhibitions). Besides, he had called for a Buddhist state as early as the Sixth Buddhist Synod in 1956. Then deftly putting his more secular opponents on the defensive, he said it was quite true that he relied on religion. "For," said he, "the more hardships I meet, the more I place my trust in religion. Except for the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, I have nothing to depend upon. By doing so I hope the anger and grudges my opponents bear me may disappear."

The Stable forces soon discovered that the religious state issue was finding favor among the people, particularly in rural districts, in the area surrounding Mandalay, and among the women. This put the party in a serious dilemma. On the one hand, an emphasis on religion could only help Nu who was considered the most devout politician in Burma, a man wholly dedicated to the furtherance of Buddhism. Thus, if anyone were to be chosen to lay the foundations of a Buddhist state it would appear to be Nu. Besides, Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe were generally recognized as secular in their philosophies. It was clear that if the Swe-Nyein faction remained silent on the issue, the Clean would win the votes of the religious-minded by default. They elected to grasp the other horn of the dilemma. Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein gave public offerings to the *sangha*, and Ba

Swe also entered a monastery. But the effort to remold their images to match Nu's failed of effectiveness.

Then the Stable attempted to "out-religious" U Nu with an eleven point program for the propagation of Buddhism while at the same time attacking Nu for using religion for political purposes. "If we do not make known our views to the people of the country in connection with U Nu's unfair propaganda and his appeal for votes through religion," they said, "the people in the country may not understand us." Their program called for making the study of Buddhism compulsory for all Buddhists, establishing future primary schools only in *pongyi kyaungs* (monasteries) where only *pongyis* would teach religion, forming training schools and a university for the *sangha*, aid to internal and external missionary work, and changes in laws relating to the *sangha*.

But the electorate seemed more impressed by the image and past deeds of U Nu as defender of the faith. To reinforce this attitude, the Clean ballot boxes were decorated with the traditional Buddhist color of yellow with a picture of U Nu superimposed. After the election there were reports of individuals having made obeisance to the likeness of the former Prime Minister, and the Stable agreed that the photograph had contributed to their defeat.

The Caretaker Government, whose job it was to hold a free election, confined its political remarks during the campaign to reminding the parties of the constitutional provision against the use of religion. Another force, the *sangha*, remained apolitical except for an occasional small group. The Thudhamma, the largest Buddhist sect in Burma, had a small vigorous pro-Stable faction and a much larger passively pro-Clean group. A pre-election survey would probably have found most of the *sangha* pro-Clean, but passively so.

Victory for U Nu and his party at the polls was overwhelming. They won better than sixty per cent of the seats in Parliament; and so effective was Nu's campaign that the Stable faction survived with an elected minority barely large enough to form a token opposition. Clearly the religious issue was of primary importance. Yet it is also true that there is not much expectation that the government will press the state-religion issue. This became apparent not long after the election when Nu attempted to delay and play down the issue.

There are other facets to the general influence of Buddhism on Burma's national policies. The question goes beyond the sprinkling of speeches with Buddhist sayings, the rationalization of decisions on the basis of religion, or the use of religion to win elections. One thinks of the possible relationship of Hinayana Buddhism to the Burmese lack of strong social consciousness. Or one ponders the national influence of the Buddhist emphasis on tolerance. This principle has impinged upon politics most markedly in relation to the communist menace in Burma. For example, the Army's efforts to gain the monks' support in its campaign against communism were often frustrated by a feeling current among sections of the *sangha* that one should be tolerant of all beliefs including extreme Marxism. Another principle has been non-violence and a refusal to take life. Again during the army campaign, noted *sayadaws* (abbots) who were willing to make anti-communist statements were unwilling to call for any sort of violence. The government has thus been forced into a series of rationalizations to support its fight against ethnic and communist rebels in Burma. For example, U Nu once explained that the killing of rebels was a political necessity, not a religious question. In the field of health, government departments have apologized for the killing of flies and mosquitoes with the statement that insects land on DDT-sprayed walls and voluntarily die. Buddhist principles do influence some state decisions, but in a subtle and sometimes strange (to Westerners) manner difficult to evaluate.

The relationship of Buddhism to politics in Burma has not followed a clearly defined path in the immediate post-war period. Yet the slow, sure development seems to be toward secularization.

How is one to explain the paradox of a religion which can provide a powerful tool at the polls, but at the same time plays no more than a passive role in governmental administration? A partial answer may be found in U Nu's complex position as symbol of Burmese Buddhism and as supporter of Western democratic ideals. In the former role he has won overwhelming electoral victories. At the same time his political philosophy demands equality for all religions and the prohibition of clerical influences in secular matters. No small part of the future of Burma depends on whether his devout Buddhism or his political philosophy eventually gets the upper hand.

In the Mountains

By MARK STRAND

Happening to sit,
for no useful reason,
in such a cold, rough terrain,
we watch our eyes take in
a snowy herringbone of firs
flush on the nearest mountain,
and are impressed with what
we see. (The mind has metaphors
for everything. Even to mind
itself, as it does, doing everything.)
But a moment later we find our gaze
has strayed to a farther,
fainter range where only
rocks break up the crust
of a plainer cloth.
And beyond that, balanced
at the end of sight,
a long question of what is sky
and what is mountain. Until,
by dark the whole scene folds
into one simple texture,
and we are deep in something else.
For though we stared at mountains
earlier, the dark has made us
wonder where we are, and where
we were, and who we are
thinking of where we were
and, even, if.

MARK STRAND is in Italy on a Fulbright grant. He attended Antioch College and Yale University.

Death and the Proud Defeated

By BENTZ PLAGEMANN

■ Tom Franklin ran into Mark Updyke for the first time in the Piazza Maria Novella, late one evening in February, before the tourists had come, when the piazza was deserted. Tom had been in Florence for almost a month then, and if he allowed himself to think about it he felt a small panic at his isolation. He hadn't talked to another American in all that time, and since he knew practically no Italian at all this meant he hadn't really talked with anyone. Except to himself. That was what bothered him. It didn't seem quite healthy, at least at twenty-six, to be walking along the street talking to yourself.

There were a few American tourists in town, of course, even in the off-season, but Tom avoided them because he hadn't come to Florence to be with American tourists, those pleasant, middle-aged couples, most of them old enough to be his parents. Tom wanted to get inside Florence, he wanted to penetrate into the expatriate colony he knew must be there, the writers, artists, composers who had left America behind them by an act of deliberate decision, as he had done, to find full expression of their talent in a more favorable intellectual climate. He felt as he had when he was a boy, going for the first time to boarding school, or to summer camp, wanting so desperately to be a part of everything all at once, to stop being a newcomer, an outsider, that he hardly knew where to begin.

Actually, the only person he had any communication with at all was his landlady at the pensione, Signorina Crespi. When he

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spoke to her in passing, or tried to detain her, both for the sake of conversation as well as to practice his Italian, the smile which she quickly pulled across her face was like a veil. Even her eyes were veiled, and behind them, Tom thought, she was probably saying, Ugly American, Ugly American. What a convenient handle that had been to give to Europeans.

There was a chill in the air of the Piazza Maria Novella and yet he lingered there, reluctant to go back to his lonely room, to the books and the typewriter which were his only companions. The facade of the church at the other end of the piazza was illumined by floodlight, the obelisks of the old race course stood revealed in the moonlight, and the ancient houses and commercial buildings facing the piazza stood with self-conscious, picturesque authority, as if they had been placed there by a set designer and knew that they were protected forever by the Florentine Arts Commission. Even the night sky had that special Florentine quality and color, a luminous umber shade, as if the watercolor sepia tones of the buildings had run into the sky to stain it. There was no discordant note anywhere, either. He didn't know why this curious thought kept recurring to him. But all cities smell of something. New York, particularly on rainy days, smelled of roasting coffee. It had always brought with it, for him, a sense of nostalgia, and anticipation, when he came into the city by train. Even his own town of Elmira smelled, of gasoline, of industrial chemicals, of soot. But Florence, scentless, was like the wonderful Domain of Arnheim, of Poe's tale, in which nothing was out of place. He couldn't help it that he was an American, but he must learn to fit in, somehow.

It was then he saw the figure crossing the square. He knew at once, from the gait, the bare head, the cut of the topcoat, that the man was American like himself, even if, in that first glance, he sensed something not quite typical, although this reaction came back to him only later. Tom was standing under the loggia of the old hospital, and when the man came near enough, he spoke, trying to keep the desperation, the loneliness from his voice. "Say," he called, "isn't this a Della Robbia?"

The man turned, hesitated for a moment, and then walked up the steps of the loggia, toward him. "It is," he said, looking from Tom to the glazed terra cotta panel under its light bulb on the wall.

"It's Andrea. Very few tourists ever find it here. Do you like it?"

"Very much," Tom said. He knew from the way the other had said "tourist" that he himself was not a tourist, or did not think of himself as one, and Tom felt the dryness in his throat, the old urgency, the new boy, waiting, while the coach looked him over for the team.

"I'm Tom Franklin," he said, putting out his hand.

The other took his hand from his topcoat pocket, without much enthusiasm, and allowed Tom to grasp it in his. He smiled, faintly. There was something in the smile which reminded Tom of Signorina Crespi, and then he knew that this man had been in Florence for some time. Even his hand, briefly in Tom's, felt European, that dry, weathered feeling, as if it were not washed as often as American hands were washed. Oh, he was presentable, indeed, older than Tom, and well-groomed, but he lacked that look of nursery freshness, the soapy cleanness, which made Americans stand out so from Europeans. Tom remembered what Signorina Crespi had once said to him when he had asked her how she liked the American soldiers who were billeted with her during the war. "They were so clean," she had said, from behind the veiled smile. "Even their uniforms. And they were perfumed." Tom had felt a momentary sense of shock at the epicene picture this evoked of American soldiers, and then he laughed. It was all that PX soap and deodorants, the shaving cream and shaving lotions.

"I've been here almost a month," Tom said, trying to hold the stranger in conversation. "I know about two words of Italian, and I'm lonely to hear the sound of my own voice. That's why I spoke to you."

The man smiled, with veiled politeness. He looked as if he were about to move on, so Tom burst out, "I've come here to write. I quit my job," he said. "I worked on a newspaper, and I had sold a couple of short stories, but then they gave me a raise, and a better job on the paper, and it scared me. You know, I didn't want to be trapped. I thought I'd better get away—go abroad. You know, like Hemingway." What a child he was! What an immature fool! Tom Franklin, boy expatriate. But he remembered boarding school, and summer camp, and the basketball team. You had to start somewhere. You had to lay yourself open.

"Have you been into the church over there?" the man asked.

Tom relaxed, on a breath. He had made the first step. "No," he said, "I haven't got around to that yet."

"There's a Masaccio in there," the man said. "And you must go into the churchyard. All the early Florentine families are buried there." While he spoke, a curious change took place in him. He was a handsome man, with a rugged face, with that not-quite-so-clean look of most American faces, but suddenly it was diffused with color, and a note of passion or of intensity came into his voice. Yet the words themselves seemed not to be addressed to Tom, or to anyone in particular, but sounded rather as if they were from the stream of an interior monologue, momentarily breaching the surface. "In the walls, too," he said. "Those walls around the churchyard are filled with tombs." "And the designs," he said, pointing, "are family crests. Longfellow once stayed in that hotel over there, and Henry James lived in the piazza for a while, somewhere. Those obelisks mark the turns of the old race course, although the race was never as famous as the one at Siena, I think. It's a beautiful place, though, especially when it rains. When it rains you can walk here and see no one else."

He stopped talking, as abruptly as he had begun. His hands were jammed into his topcoat pockets.

"Can I buy you a drink?" Tom asked, feeling somewhat uncomfortable. "A coffee?"

The man took one hand from his coat pocket and looked at his wrist watch. "I have an appointment," he said. "I'm sorry. Perhaps some other time."

"Sure," Tom said. There was a disappointment in the brevity of that word, and the other man must have caught it.

"I teach a night class at the university," he said. He spoke more naturally now, in a conversational tone in which something seemed to have reasserted itself, an old sense of duty, or some almost forgotten loyalty. "Where are you staying?" he asked. "I'll stop around tomorrow night after class and pick you up."

Tom gave him the street name and the number of his pensione, and the man said goodnight and walked on across the piazza. He walked with the sense of purpose of a man who knows where he is going and what he is doing, and watching him, Tom suddenly real-

ized that he didn't even know his name. He shrugged. Well, he had done his childish best. He had tried to make a first step, anyway.

It was still too early to go home to bed. He started off across the piazza, in the direction of that complex of small streets which lead into the Via Tournabuoni. He passed, in one narrow street, the incongruously named Jolly Bar, the name glowing, even more incongruously in neon script of a jarring, acid blue. He would stop there on his way back for a coffee, after he had walked a bit. He knew where he was heading, but he didn't like to admit it to himself. There was one block of the Tournabuoni where the prostitutes paraded at night, and he liked to go there and stand in a doorway and watch.

The prostitutes were young and pretty and smartly dressed. They walked on their high heels like fashion models. Sometimes they carried a tightly rolled umbrella, just as the models did, and mostly they were hatless, with their hair artfully arranged or disarranged to fall away from a center part over their forehead. They wore that deliberate slumbrous look assumed by so many young Italian women of fashion, a look by which they seemed to dehumanize themselves and to be not human beings so much as female animals, existing for one purpose only.

The Italian men shopped for the prostitutes in cars, pulling over to the curb, sitting behind the wheel to bargain, while the prostitute stood. Tom told himself that this was why he came each night, to watch the play. He was gathering material for his work. If one of the prostitutes approached him in his doorway, or if he felt desire for any particular one, he would close his fist tightly around the book of traveller's checks in the side pocket of his jacket. There was enough money there to last six months, if he was careful. He had six months in which to write something to sell, so that he could stay on. For the present he had to live like a monk. He had to go back to his cell alone.

But first he went to the Jolly Bar. Tonight, to celebrate his first conversation with an American, and because he could not afford a woman, he ordered a cognac. There were Italian soldiers in the bar, boys in uniform, and one of them came up to Tom to practice his textbook English. At least that seemed to be his purpose, but there was resentment behind the false smile of his eyes.

"You like Marilyn Monroe?" he asked.

"Sure," Tom said. "I like Marilyn Monroe."

"Italian men like Marilyn Monroe better," the young soldier said.

"Oh," said Tom.

The other soldiers had stopped talking now to watch, interrupting that incessant, ceaseless conversation of Italian men, which seems like an endless preamble to violence, or to an act of sex.

"Italian men poor," the soldier said. "But Italian men love women. American men love whiskey."

Tom turned away. Go to hell, he said, under his breath.

The next night Tom waited in his room. He had tried to write that day, but it had all gone wrong. It sounded clumsy and stupid, too earnest, too young. In Elmira he had been filled with ideas for stories, all of them pushing at the back of his mind. But in Florence he just couldn't get started.

In his room there was a lumpy bed, an old wardrobe with too few hangers, a chair, and a desk with a lamp too dim for reading or working at night.

Tom stood at the long window with the shutters thrown back. The little bent old chambermaid closed them and bolted them each night at dusk, and when he came to his room after dinner each night Tom would unbolt them and open them again. He could look down on roof tiles, and he could see beyond to the dome of the cathedral. He told himself he would never tire of looking at that, and at the Florentine sky, which even at night seemed illumined from within, like a light placed behind tinted opaque glass.

Ten o'clock came, and ten-thirty. He heard a step on the stair, and he picked up his coat from the chair. It was Signorina Crespi with a note. "I'm sorry," the note said. "I can't make it tonight." The note was signed with a name, Mark Updyke.

Tom tore it up and threw it in the wastebasket. It was ridiculous to feel disappointed because a man he didn't know had backed out of having a drink with him. Why had he even written the note? And why sign his name? It was obvious he had regretted his impulse. Why not leave it at that? What an odd character.

Or could it be that he was the odd one. Alone so much. Talking to himself. He put on his coat and went downstairs.

He had seen from his window that the roof tiles glistened, but in the street it wasn't actually raining. There was a moisture in the air, more like a heavy dew. Tom set out to walk along the Arno, enjoying the cool dampness on his heated face. How stupid to be irritated or disappointed over such a trivial matter. He was here in Florence. He had made it. He was where he wanted to be, and he had six months, or more than five, at any rate, in which to find a place for himself. First things first. He would make an effort to go back to the beginning, to retrace his way back to the impulse which had brought him here, and he would begin that by trying to look at everything again with that same sense of wonder with which he had first seen it.

The Arno, threaded under its lyrical bridges, seemed more than ever a mystery never to be understood. He walked as far as the Vasari colonnades and stood with his elbows on the parapet to look down into the river. He had heard that each year there were many persons who committed suicide by throwing themselves into the Arno, and looking down at it he wondered if it had been an ultimate despair which had driven them to that act or the compulsion of the river itself, which seemed to hold some secret under its swift still surface, so that possibly it was a symbol not of life but of death.

What made him so morbid tonight? He turned away from the Arno and walked on, into the Piazza della Signoria, which still seemed to him the most astonishing open place in the entire world, like a roofless drawing room, with the treasures of the house set out under the sky. Tonight, however, even the Piazza della Signoria disappointed him. In its emptiness it seemed merely static, as if it had long ago given up hope, or the expectation of hope, and even Michaelangelo's David, or the copy or it which stood there, seemed curiously lonely and still, as if it had been abandoned, or as if it were trapped in a fatal immobility, locked in the stone from which it had been cut.

He must not permit himself to entertain such fantasies. He must fight his loneliness. Or, at the very least, he must try to put it all down on paper and not waste his time so idly. He started back

toward the pensione and bed, repeating a small litany to himself in time to his steps as he walked: the stones of Florence, the flat, worn stones of Florence. Once back in his room, he did an unexpected thing, surprising even to himself. He pulled the shutters of the window to, and bolted them, before he got into bed.

The very next day, crossing the Ponte Vecchio to have lunch at an inexpensive restaurant he had discovered on the other side of the Arno, Tom saw Mark Updyke approaching. He thought of turning back, since, narrow as the sidewalk was, it would be impossible to pass without recognition, but there was a woman on the arm of Mark Updyke and Tom was so struck by her appearance that he failed to turn back before it was too late.

She was slender, elegant, and possibly either American or English. It was obvious that she had not been young for a very long time, but that protesting that, defying time, she had given herself into the hands of others, the masseuse, the hairdresser, the coutourier, in what might be called a private pact with the devil in which the personality, since there was no soul to be exchanged in barter, had been surrendered for a false youth, laid on like cloisonné enamel. She wore a suit of English tweed and walking shoes whose elegance seemed to spurn their function. There was a scarf of chiffon tied with artful carelessness at her throat, and beneath a deep-brimmed hat her face was revealed like the simulated jewel for which the setting had been prepared, so worked upon and polished that it no longer resembled any natural fact.

They were talking together, Updyke and his companion, and Tom stepped from the curb into the street, hoping they would pass him unnoticed, but as they did, Mark Updyke turned and caught his eyes.

"Hello," he said. He paused. The woman on his arm looked at Tom with bright, impartial curiosity. "I'm sorry about last night," Updyke said.

"It doesn't matter," Tom said.

The woman spoke. "So this is the 'innocent' of your encounter," she said. "But I think he is charming!" Her words were measured; her accent was the accent of the international drawing room, impossible to place. She spoke with practiced animation, an archness

not quite arch, the voice of a woman for whom any meeting with a man is at once a flirtation.

"But what is his name?" she asked.

"This is Mr. Franklin," Updyke said. "Mr. Franklin, this is the Duchess of Beauleigh."

Since there were no duchesses in Elmira, and Tom had never met one before, he was not certain how to respond to this introduction. He found himself blushing, like the schoolboy he felt he would always be, but before he could say anything at all the duchess was speaking again, in the way of a woman for whom silence is not to be tolerated except in moments of intimacy. "You must bring him to tea," she was saying. And, turning briefly to Tom, "No one refuses me anything. "But," to Updyke again, "I do think it best that you fetch him for me, because think if someone else were to discover him on the way and we were to lose him! How dreadful that would be!" And to Tom, "Tomorrow, then."

"I'll pick you up at half-past four," Updyke said. And then they were gone, with a little spray of laughter following the duchess like a ribbon, to tie the moment together, to save it from any graceless or untidy transition.

As Updyke walked Tom to the apartment of the duchess on the following afternoon, he talked to him again in that state of excitement or passion which seemed to balance, on the other hand, the abrupt withdrawal of his nature. Or as if he were admitting Tom to that interior monologue, the world itself in which it took place, after his first inexplicable hesitation. He spoke of the duchess, explaining her to Tom, talking rapidly, walking rapidly, so that at times it was difficult for Tom to walk abreast of him on the narrow sidewalk. At such moments Updyke would grasp his arm and thrust Tom ahead of him without interrupting the flow of his words, speaking into the ear of his captive audience. "She's a marvelously fascinating woman," he said. "She is absolutely unique, out of the past, like a character in Henry James. She married the Duke of Beauleigh when he was very old and she was very young. She was American, you know. And she was the scandal of the continent." Updyke said this last line as if he were reading it from the page of a novel, as if even for him it had the unreality which it had for Tom, or as if in

telling it to Tom he was suddenly aware of the dramatic unreality it would have for him. "Oh, the stories they tell of her!" he said. "Absolutely delicious! Two men died for her, they say. But now she never leaves Florence. She's been here for years."

"Have you been in Florence long yourself?" Tom asked. They had come to a wider sidewalk now, the new sidewalk near the Ponte Vecchio where the buildings had once stood which the Germans had mined. They could walk side by side now, and Tom could see Updyke's face as they talked.

"Oh, yes, indeed," Updyke said. "I've been here for several years now."

And then all at once Tom knew. How he knew he couldn't have explained, but suddenly it came to him that Mark Updyke was one of those American soldiers who had never gone home after World War II. "Were you in the war?" Tom asked.

"Yes," Updyke said. The closed look came over his face again, and the passion fell from his voice. Tom resolved to ignore this.

"And you never went back home," Tom said. It was more a statement of fact than a question.

"I was mustered out in Paris," Updyke said, accepting Tom's statement for the fact that it was. "I traveled about a bit at first, but I always came back to Italy. You can feel it at the border, I think. Civilization, rushing out to greet you when you open the door. And you go in, and close the door behind you."

"You've never been back to the States at all?" Tom asked.

"I thought of going back once, about five years ago. I was to have a show of my work in New York."

"Oh, you paint," Tom said.

"Yes," Updyke said. "I paint."

"And what happened?" Tom persisted. Perhaps it wasn't polite to proceed with such an inquisition, but he had to know, because this was the sort of man he wanted to know, even, it was possible, the sort of man he wanted to be. "Did the show fall through?" he asked.

"Oh, no, indeed," Updyke said. "But as I was crating my canvases, I suddenly stopped. I asked myself what I was doing. Was I really interested in the judgment of my American *peers*?" He said the last word with a sort of amused contempt, and laughed.

"You've never regretted that?" Tom asked.

"Regretted it?" Updyke laughed again. "I thank my stars that something held me back in time. I couldn't be tempted to go back now, because it's too late. I don't speak the language any more." The passion of the interior monologue returned. "I'm free, finally," he said. "I made it. I got away from that awful competition, the compulsion for recognition, for success in material terms which animates that great mechanistic society of ours."

Tom felt vaguely uncomfortable at these words. It wasn't that they were new to him. He had heard these sentiments expressed before, at home, or in New York, and they hadn't troubled him there, where the sound of that mechanistic society was outside the window and the compulsion for success everywhere in the air, but here these same words seemed curiously out of context, embarrassing, although he didn't understand why this should be so.

"Where do you show your paintings?" he asked.

Updyke shrugged. "I don't," he said. "I stack them in a corner. I'm content to let posterity be the judge of their worth. But here we are," he said. "Through that courtyard over there."

In the drawing room of the Duchess of Beauleigh everything was perfect, a room in the Domain of Arnheim, with nothing out of place. The duchess, with a wave of her hand, had brought Updyke to her side on a sofa, where, in billows of chiffon, with what must have been a gesture of infinite arrogance, since insensibility in the circumstances would have seemed inexplicable, she had placed herself at the tea table under a full-length portrait by Boldini, painted of her at the height of her beauty, standing with imperious grace in a golden light which played on the details of flowers and bibelots, on the surfaces of rosy flesh and brilliant fabrics.

The drawing room which the duchess surveyed, both from her lost youth and her present age, glowed with that same light, reflected from the painting on polished wood, on velvet, on boule and crystal and gilt, and sitting there in the chair to which the duchess had motioned him, a Louis XIV armchair stitched in needlepoint with scenes after Fragonard, Tom had the curious sensation that if he did not move now and then, even ever so slightly, he might not be able to move ever again, that suddenly, with a warning tremor, they would

all be struck into immobility, to exist only within the frame of the painting which he faced. From his chair he could see also, through the long windows, the pale Tuscan sky, where motionless clouds climbed the still air in baroque masses of celadon and copper tones. One had seen this sky in a thousand paintings; one had only to step into the Pitti or the Uffizi to see it again, reflected endlessly along the gallery walls.

"Mr. Franklin," the duchess said, lightly, idly, pouring tea, "and what is your first name? Surely it couldn't be—no, it can't be, Benjamin."

"It's Thomas," Tom said, coloring. "Tom."

"Ah," the duchess said. "Then, of course, it must be Thomas Jefferson."

"Well," Tom said uncomfortably, "actually it is. My father was a fierce patriot."

Updyke and the duchess burst into laughter. And why did Tom feel that sense of embarrassment again, of discomfort that was somehow like anger? Sometimes at home people laughed at his name, and he would laugh with them, because if you looked at it in a certain way it was amusing, just the sound of it, but why were these two laughing? Was it merely at the sound of the name, or was it something else?

"My instinct was right," the duchess said, handing Updyke the cup of tea to hand to Tom. "Mr. Thomas Jefferson Franklin has come to us at the perfect moment, bringing that freshness from the provinces to our drawing room, as if he were sent as a special emissary. He can help us to prepare for the siege."

"The siege?" Tom said. He must try to appear less of a bumpkin. After all, even in Elmira he had gone to tea in a old lady's drawing room.

"The season," the duchess said, with a great mock sigh of despair. "The tourists. Soon they will all come pouring in in a great flood, washing at our very doorstep." She turned to smile at Updyke, handing him a silver plate of cakes to pass to Tom. "We must lay in our supplies," she said. "We must plan our diversions. Books. Music. Games. And you, Mr. Franklin, you must share our retreat. You must live our own Decameron with us, in the modern plague of Florence."

"Is it really as bad as all that?" Tom asked.

The duchess threw up her hands. "Perfectly dreadful!" she said. "I never venture into the street during the season. Oh, the ladies from Dubuque! They pain the eyes!"

"And the men!" Updyke said, laughing. "The men in the Harry Truman shirts!"

"And the cameras!"

"Oh, the cameras!"

"The monuments are crumbling into dust from being photographed so often," Updyke said.

"And surely you know what the Florentines say about their paintings," the duchess said, turning to Tom.

"I'm not sure that I do," Tom said.

"They say that the paintings in the Pitti grow ugly from looking at the tourists," the duchess said.

"Delicious!" Updyke said.

The duchess turned to him, to take up his flattery and admiration like a bouquet. She placed one hand on the sleeve of Updyke's jacket, a hand whose age no artifice could disguise, with blue veins under tissue-paper flesh drawn back over almost visible bones, and suddenly Tom knew, with a reaction of sick revulsion, that they were lovers.

When Tom finally left the apartment, pleading that he had promised Signorina Crespi to be back in time for dinner, an explanation which also brought laughter of amusement, he left Updyke with the duchess and hurried along the darkening streets alone.

He knew where he was going, but this time he did not hesitate to admit it to himself. There was one particular girl of the Via Tournabuoni whose memory did not leave him easily at night when he went back to his room, and he hoped to find her there now, early as it was. He hastened through the narrow streets, passing the Jolly Bar, its neon sign unlighted, and turned into the Tournabuoni.

Almost at once he saw her there, walking ahead of him. He suspected she was a child, really, surely not more than nineteen, a country girl with a full figure and dark, moist skin. She was walking close to the buildings, looking into the shop windows. The city lights had not yet been turned on, and there was something pathetic, lost about her lonely figure in the gray street, silhouetted aimlessly

against the stained, rubbed buildings. And then it was that Tom understood why the absence of any characteristic odor in the city had seemed so significant to him. It was simply that the city had been dead for such a very long time that it was beyond decay, like a bleached skull lying in desert sand.

He came alongside of her and fell into step with her, breathing too heavily to speak at once, and she looked up at him and took his arm, and they walked on.

"You speak Italian?" she asked at last.

"No," Tom said, "I don't."

"I speak little English," the girl said.

"Good," Tom said.

"You want to know my price?" she asked.

"You name it," Tom said. "You tell me your price."

The girl looked up at him quickly, with childlike, peasant candor. "You no bargain?" she asked.

"No," Tom said. "I don't want to bargain."

Beneath her perfume Tom could detect her own musky scent, and he knew what she would feel like. His pulse quickened and his tongue was thick in his mouth, but with a detached part of his mind he was reminding himself that he must make certain when he left her that he still had his book of traveller's checks in his pocket, because in the morning he would go, first thing, to the American Express, to buy a plane ticket for New York.

The First Dream: The Garage

By GEORGE ABBE

I kept telephoning the repairman at the garage. "Explain:
when will my car be ready?" And yet there,
staring out of a phone-booth, I stood,—there
in the very garage I was telephoning to.

"My dog," I said. "My luggage. Are they
safe? Locked in? What was wrong? Why
did I leave the car?"

The garageman's voice, thin and far, cracked like a celluloid
toy. I couldn't hear a word.

I hurried from the booth. The garage had many levels.
I kept striding down, down, searching.
There were burning-black cables and ancient cars being raised;
straining men held up cylinder-blocks.
I pushed through dangling cables and chains;
crazed, I sought everywhere, I ran.
But none was the repairman, none my car.
Wherever it stood, helpless and spent,
my dog was inside, all
my belongings.

I flung myself into another booth; my voice
boiled in the mouthpiece, under the close roof, like scalding
water: "Which part
of the garage are you in?
Is it fixed? The dog, you say, is gone?
The luggage was never there?"

I stared through my sweat, past
the scratched and grimy phone-booth glass; and tall
and horrifying hung cranes and chains and cables,
a forest through which
the click of the repairman's voice seemed to come,
humming into the phone over long wire, too far,
too tired. "I can't tell you how to get
to this level. I don't know what's wrong with your car.
The doors are unlocked and the luggage and dog
are gone."

GEORGE ABBE's poems and stories have appeared widely; he was the 1956 Shelley Memorial Award winner; he is the author of four novels and a novella, *One More Puritan*, published last July; and he has just recorded two hours of his poetry for the Library of Congress archives. He is resident poet at Russell Sage College.

Sparrow

By DAVID SHAPIRO

(1)

Swift on the burst bough
the fractured sparrows are playing in light,
shrinking to size
of the split sycamore. And I suppose they too
wonder at the slush in the alleyways and the yard,
the sunfall in your eyes.

The school children in their dirge troops
hurl up the punctual snowball at them
and stay to duck
the sparrow's scowling birdtongue.

(2)

Creature of two notes
yesterday, and this morning amazed with February
you won't come out to greet me
because I carry books
and am afraid.

Somewhere lovely, back of the sycamore,
I heard again
your small throat suffer
that stunted beautiful range.

Why don't we clear it up from here?
Why in this air was the Wrong Way so
significant and still?
Some poplar-leaf, stemless and scraped,
bangs itself on my stiff boots, over and over
until the short wind stops

and I am late as it is.

DAVID SHAPIRO is a high school freshman in Newark, N.J., and this is his first nationally published poem. An accomplished violinist, he has appeared on the concert stage and the airwaves, including Voice of America programs.

The Alexandrian Projection

By MARY GRAHAM LUND

■ It was Mr. Durrell himself who brought up the question of Mercator's famous projection. When Kenneth Young interviewed him for the British magazine *Encounter*, he asked if it was possible "to reflect in a literary way mathematical concepts," such as the space-time continuum.

Mr. Durrell confessed that he had received a letter from a mathematician saying, "Dear Boy: Poppycock! The continuum is a mathematical concept and to try to make literature of such things is rubbish. . . ." Mr. Durrell added that he "might have addressed the same sort of letter to Mr. Mercator about his projection and said, 'Dear Boy: This is not a sphere,' to which he might have replied that it wasn't intended to be a sphere, but you see what I'm getting at."

Some people, even after the publication of *Clea*, the sequel, are still wondering what Mr. Durrell is getting at in *The Alexandria Quartet*. There's such a very large continent of sex, and another of politics and intrigue—and then all those little islands in the "dark tides of Eros"! And the mountains of humor, some of it rather macabre; the glittering lakes of intellectuality above which wing iridescent shades of dead poets; nor can the steaming erotic marshes be forgotten, nor the twilight jungles in which stalk monsters of perverted imagination.

One must admit that Mr. Mercator's projection is rather distorted, but it was probably very useful about directions and that sort of thing. As Mr. Durrell's projection of the human psyche may be,

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too. At any rate, it's very colorful, with jolly little symbols everywhere for the delight of the critics. Although it must be conceded that Mr. Durrell has a poet's eye for beauty, it may be possible that he didn't even know they were there until critic Frank J. Warnke *et al* began to point them out. For the symbols are not embroidered upon the fabric in this novel. They are woven into it.

Mr. Durrell thinks that the artist can not really mold his work, "can not force Time, nor open Space—he must listen to the *silence around him*." At least, that's what a fictioneer in *The Alexandria Quartet* declares. The silence may be the still, small voice of experience, the overflowing of an unconscious packed with all the details of *time* that have marked it through the years—"Not Space-Time as in Proust or Joyce, but Bergsonian Duration," Mr. Durrell tells us in his prefatory note to *Balthazar*, describing his fictional method.

The impact of his time in Mr. Durrell's youth was keyed to violence and war and international crime. As Henry Miller plunged into the dark, disordered world of his *Tropics* for cleansing, Lawrence Durrell found in the blue world of the Mediterranean his *quiet place*, where he might order his experience. He tries to explain this in one of the books of his middle period, after he had published his first unsuccessful novel (at the age of eighteen) and several books of poetry under the pseudonym of Charles Norden. A second novel, *The Black Book*, recently published in the United States, had been published in France by Henry Miller's publisher, and banned in England.

Mr. Durrell had proved to himself by this time that the line of the Surrealist Manifesto was not for him, that he must find his own road. In *Prospero's Cell*, which is sometimes listed as a novel, sometimes as a "travel book" as its sub-title suggests (A guide to the landscapes and manners of the island of Corcyra), Mr. Durrell writes: "Between Calabria and Corfu the blue begins—You enter Greece, as one might a dark crystal. . . . Other countries may offer you discoveries in manners of lore or landscape: Greece offers you something harder—the *discovery of yourself*."

This sounds like a shout of triumph. And it is dated (for the book is written almost like a diary) "10-4-37. April in Greece." Nineteen days later, there is an entry which suggests the polyphonic style of Mr. Durrell's four novels (*Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive*, *Clea*)

which were to burst upon the Western world with the suddenness of an atomic bomb just twenty years later: "It is a sophism to imagine a strict dividing line between the waking world and the world of dreams. N—— and I, confused by the sense of several contemporaneous lives being lived inside us; the sense of being mere points of reference for space and time." Here, perhaps, was born the idea of the "word continuum" which Mr. Durrell thinks a good sub-title for *The Alexandria Quartet*. On the island of Corcyra, "time" was merely a word—a word of no meaning. The peasants, for instance, measured distance by the number of cigarettes smoked while walking it.

In *Prospero's Cell*, Mr. Durrell reports a conversation at an inn between two writers: "I think Socrates unhappy since greater wisdom imposes greater strain."—"No," said the other, "wisdom teaches the ratiocinative faculty how to rest, to attain a deeper surrender of the *whole* self to the flux of time and space." Mr. Durrell does not seek for himself or for his reader *escape* on his word-continuum, but self-discovery, not sensation but integration. Prospero's Cell, pointed out to tourists on the island, was a fitting place to attempt such an integration of imagination and reality, for the discovery of reality through the imagination.

The American Henry Miller and the colonial, India-born Englishman met here in 1937, when Mr. Durrell was, according to Alfred Perlés (*My Friend, Henry Miller*, 1956), "a handsome young fellow in his middle twenties with golden hair and a boyish face that made him look like a cherub." He was married to the artist Nancy Myers, "tall and slender, like an elegant flamingo." But she was not too elegant to go into the kitchen and prepare for the three authors "a delicious dinner of grilled filet steak."

Durrell and Miller acted and reacted upon each other to the advantage of both. Durrell saw in Miller

> a giant in whose breast was germinating an amalgam of creative forces which only partially expressed themselves through the medium of writing. Every hundred years or so [young Mr. Durrell told M. Perlés], literature is visited, as though by a man from outer space. As a creative spirit, Miller has to be accepted like a live volcano. His raw material is formlessness and chaos, but the formlessness turns into life, the chaos into the world we live in.

Clarification is a better word than presentation for Mr. Durrell's method of picturing the characters who evolve from the chaos of his unconscious. And here again the geographical metaphor is pertinent. The method is mainly exploratory—a nearer view of the same scene, a more powerful lens, a clearer day. He makes Darley say (in *Balthazar*), "The picture I drew was a provisional one, like the picture of a lost civilization deduced by a few fragments." On his island, with Dr. Balthazar's notebooks, he is trying to reorganize his earlier impressions of people and events. "I had set myself the task of trying to recover them in words, reinstate them in memory, allot to each his and her position in time." Yet he finds it difficult to concede to them any more *common reality* than to the words he had used about them. A few pages later, Darley speaks of "painting the city upon a curved surface." The geographical metaphor was constantly in Mr. Durrell's consciousness.

Critics have had a field day with the Mercator distortions of the continent of sex, deriding the author's claim that his theme is "the investigation of modern love." Justine, in *Clea*, enumerates the five principal countries: "Pursewarden and Liza, Darley and Melissa, Mountolive and Leila, Nessim and Justine, Narouz and Clea." This is surely a Mercator distortion. In the first place, the male partner is mentioned first, and he is rarely the stronger in this novel. Besides, the map is definitely out-dated: the modern states (in the fourth volume) are Liza and Mountolive, Clea and Darley, Justine and Nessim. Pursewarden, Melissa, Leila, and Narouz are dead. And some of the states which Justine mentions were never autonomous, never merged into statehood.

Narouz never declared his love for Clea, except in the hysterical outburst when he thought himself the murderer of Justine at a masked ball, not knowing that she had given her ring to Toto. (An unsolved murder flung into the dark forest.)

Ludwig and Lisa Pursewarden were joined only by the memory of their childhood's incestuous love, a brief Byronic romance that lay on Ludwig's conscience like an open wound, a trauma that prevented any but purely physical passions—a wildly humorous affair with Justine, an almost fatherly tenderness for Melissa.

Darley and Melissa's affair was a strangely gentle, almost an

asexual, friendship. Its depth was not realized by Darley until after her death. Years later, back in Alexandria, after he had delivered Melissa's child to Nessim, her father, he is obsessed by it. Waking or sleeping, he dreamed of Melissa—until one day she left him suddenly. And then he mourned for her, oppressed by guilt—he had killed the dream with words, with his poems! "Words, the acid-bath of words!" Justine, he thought, had been his real love; but now, on meeting her, he feels a nauseating revulsion. She understands. "Which of us was the greater liar?" she asks. "I cheated you, you cheated yourself." And then he meets Clea, in the same cafe, the same seat, the same posture in which he first saw Melissa. And he realizes that Clea is in his heart an extension of Melissa.

David Mountolive, on his first visit to Alexandria, when he was a very young attaché of the British embassy, had a brief but passionate affair with the young and beautiful mother of his friend Nessim Hosnani, whom he had met at Oxford. Nessim, who dearly loved his mother, was happy to see her happiness with his friend. But Narouz, the younger brother, who had not been educated in England, felt in his heart his father's pain—the aged and invalid father who, for selfish reasons, encouraged his wife's infidelity. After a few weeks of bliss, Mountolive left Alexandria. He was absorbed into the "jesuitical world" of politics. But one thing enabled him to keep his soul intact—the chatty, intellectual letters of Leila Hosnani. For she was a woman of the world. As a girl she had refused to wear the veil; and her parents had given her a Western education such as only Egyptian boys customarily received. Her marriage had not been by parental choice alone. She was attracted by the cosmopolitanism of the middle-aged Coptic prince. After her husband's death, she might have joined Mountolive in Paris, but a sudden and malignant attack of smallpox robbed her of her great beauty. She hid her face behind the veil and continued her intellectual flirtation by post. She held Mountolive by feigning an almost masculine friendship, to which he could confide his adventures in love and sex. She forgave him freely, gaily. He had no inkling of what it cost her! When he came back to Alexandria at last as Sir David Mountolive and fell in love with Liza Pursewarden, he wrote Leila of his new happiness. When Leila, who had out of cowardice refused to

see him, read his letter and realized that this was no light affair, she let go of life—which had been a burden to her since the death of her son Narouz and the house arrest of her beloved Nessim.

Nessim Hosnani's almost idolatrous affection for his mother long held him from love. His interest in Justine Arnauti, a divorcee, who was said to be looking in the brothels of Alexandria for a girl-child who had been kidnapped years ago, sprang principally from the fact that she was a Jewess. He was involved in a plot to support the cause of Palestine, believing that it was the only possible way to combat the Arab world and thereby bring freedom to all the minority groups in the Middle East. His mother opposed the marriage and looked with an understanding hate at her new daughter during the four-day nuptial celebration. "An adventuress," she muttered, recognizing the same love of power that smoldered in her own heart.

Now, in *Clea*, Nessim's mother is dead, his brother is dead, and he and Justine are held as prisoners on the Hosnani estate. Justine has turned shrewish. The prisoners snarl at each other. But on the last page, the curtain is lifting. The sun is shining. The parole is lifted. Clea writes to Darley that she has seen Justine walking down Rue Fuad with Memlik, who *is* the Egyptian government. They are on their way to meet Nessim at a fashionable restaurant. In the powder room, Justine tells Clea that she has discovered Memlik's weakness—that "he wants to move in social circles in Alexandria, and meet a lot of white women." When they reach the table, Nessim is talking to Memlik, but turns to embrace Justine, "right there in the café," both showing an ecstatic passion.

So much for the great distorted continent of normal sex. What about the perversions that the critics have been shouting about, the unstable little islands in the dark tides of Eros? The critics have enumerated "three queers, a Lesbian, a nymphomaniac," plus sadism, incest, a child brothel, and kindred horrors. Mr. Durrell had Pursewarden, his fictional novelist, plead his case in *Clea*: "Art, like a skilled masseur on a playing field, is always standing by to help deal with casualties. . . . That is why it always goes for the sore places . . . the sins, perversions. . . . Art is the purifying factor merely. It predicates nothing. . . ." Dr. Balthazar calls it a "technique of therapy" and says that a "good doctor, and in a special way the psychologist,

makes it harder for the patient to recover too easily . . . for the secret of healing is in the patient. . . ."

Dr. Balthazar himself is one of the tragic casualties portrayed in the *Quartet*. He is a good physician, a man of great compassion, a humanitarian, an intellectual who gives his name to the second volume of the tetralogy. And yet he cannot combat his perversion: in the last volume, when Darley visits him, he is in bed in an unkempt room. Darley is shocked at the way the doctor has changed; his hair is white, his hands are bandaged, his false teeth in a glass.

Dr. Balthazar is surprised that Darley has not yet heard the scandal. He looks at the teeth with malice. It was the knowledge that he must lose his teeth that set him off, he complains. He thought that at last he had been released from the bondage of his fleshly appetites. As a leader of the Cabal, he thought his quest for truth was pure. But now he realizes that he was using the Cabal for his own ends. His first mistake. And then he fell in love as he had not done since he was eighteen. A most disastrous choice, a Greek actor who looked like a god but had a small mean spirit. A murderous passion! He sank into utter debasement and in the depths of despair tried to commit suicide by cutting off his hands. But Dr. Amaril and other friends would not let him die. Gradually he began to swim up to the surface again. "Life is the master," he told Darley. "We have been living against the grain of our intellects. The real teacher is endurance."

Old Scobie, another of the "queers," a transvestite, is presented in terms of low comedy—the broadest farce, in fact—a boon to future college professors with a flair for amusing their classes. Even in the tomb, Old Scobie is a comedian. Clea takes Darley to visit his "shrine," for he has undergone a strange metamorphosis: he is now El Scob, a "holy one." Abdul leads them into an airless tomb, where old Scobie's bathtub is being invoked to confer fertility upon the childless. As Darley left the shrine with Clea, he felt laughter "pile up inside him."

The Lesbian and the nymphomaniac are combined in the person of the "mysterious," the "magnificent Egyptian Jewish Aphrodite," to quote at least two reviewers. It was the novelist Arnauti, her first husband, who pinned on her the tag "nymphomaniac" in his novel *Moeurs*; and we hear several times of a friendship with Clea that

Clea's father deplores, though Clea herself considered it rewarding. Clea worried lest her virginity might be blocking her creative ability as an artist. Her naive appeal to Pursewarden is one of the peaks of humor in the novel. Later she had a "Syrian episode" with Dr. Amaril, not pictured, only casually mentioned. Still later, she collaborated with Dr. Amaril in constructing a nose for Semira, with whom the doctor is madly in love.

Clea's love for Darley seems idyllic at first, but it requires a horrible accident to bring her to terms with her art, perhaps eventually with her lover. Reviewers have called this accident unnecessary. Why the piling up of horror? Mercator's projection requires the charting of the fears and terrors of the unknown. But Krafft-Ebing and Kinsey have named the perversions. Perhaps the named islands need to be explored. Mr. Durrell realizes that Mercator's is not a sphere—yet any type of charting is of benefit. For the sake of compassion. Raising the question of personality.

And there is the continent of politics. A colonial, born in an India that was still Kiplingesque, a man at home in Greece and Alexandria, in the Mediterranean world, Mr. Durrell has little trouble drawing the map of international intrigue in its intricate outlines around and through the love stories and personal problems. It is not, after all, a new continent! World events serve only as *milieu* for the characters who move as real people, not puppets, across the page.

The moments of shock, the turnings of fortune, are strange and unexpected, as they are in real life, and the tasks of recovering human dignity are endless: Dr. Balthazar being "rehabilitated" by walking to a café with his friends, his new teeth, and dark glasses, after the scandal of his drunken debauchery; Justine living down her past as a child of the guttter and her portrait as a nymphomaniac in Arnauti's novel; Liza Pursewarden surviving her brother's suicide and even the cruel burden of the debt his letters laid upon her to bring to David Mountolive a pure and perfect love; Nessim Hosnani seeing his plans for building a haven for minority groups in the midst of the Arab world fail, his fortune sequestrated by the Egyptian government, half blinded and maimed, driving an ambulance with a princely air, or smiling at his little daughter, Justine, whom Darley had taught to believe in fairyland.

Examples are numerous. Mr. Durrell's characters meet the shocks of life with an audacious, sometimes flamboyant, courage and undertake the tedious and painful recoveries without complaints. Not that they understand what they are doing! In *Prospero's Cell*, Mr. Durrell speaks of an evening when friends were talking, Bach playing from the balcony, somebody "absorbed in his science of unknown relationships, hurting us all because he implies experience he cannot state." The hyperboles of life and love are beyond statement.

Whatever the frame, Mr. Durrell's subject is discovery through love of man as a part of the universe, or the universe as a part of man—man the custodian of reality; the portrayal of love in all its forms, in conflict, toward not death but life, toward the renewal of the individual life, eventually toward a new life of humanity. The earthly moment may start heavenly consequences, if the spirit is free, if passion is not bound by earthly rules. In *The Alexandria Quartet* there is no "social" reality; there are only the realities of "solitaries," each of whom must remain within the radical ambit of his life, knowing the world of things only in their utilitarian reference to himself. For some men, work may be sufficient support for the spirit. Before coming out to Egypt, David Mountolive visited his mother in England and picked up one of his father's books, the translation of a Pali text. In the preface his father had written, this sentence stood out like a promise or a warning: "For those of us who stand upon the margin of the world, as yet unsolicited by any God, the only truth is that work itself is Love."

It is obvious that men and women live to a certain extent in different subjective worlds, and equally obvious that sex is their best medium of understanding. Like the poet Shelley, Mr. Durrell believes that sex, in its deepest reality and in its highest manifestations, is a psychic and not merely a physical act. Men and women try to express themselves through each other, desiring a new spiritual revelation, conscious of intimations of undeveloped powers within or beyond them. He protests, like Shelley, against the *uses* of love. He makes Darley complain that Justine used his love, as Nessim used Melissa's. Once Nessim's love for Justine had "colored his unhappiness with a kind of ecstasy," but now he had "hung her up in a cobwebbed corner of his life, like a marionette on strings"—a descrip-

tion of how many men treat their wives. Too many people are stuck in the physical aspect of sex, unaware of the poetic rapport which it tries to teach.

Mr. Durrell does not trust the "dark tides of Eros," or speak of D. H. Lawrence's "dark gods." He prefers to go back to the twelfth-century philosopher Abelard and say with him, "I believe the love of women may be a unique liberator of light." And Héloise, his beloved, says, "The sacred things of life must all, *in our day*, be renewed by a sort of profanity." By "profane love" she meant sexual love. In "our day" eight centuries later the problem is still with us. Sex seeks its level, is good or bad, uplifting or debasing, according to its use or abuse.

The centering of emotion on a person of the same sex is not intrinsically evil—the evil springs from superstitions, from neurotic fears, from the witch-hunts it engenders in even an enlightened society. Anthropology and biology, as well as the unexpurgated literature of the past, indicate that homosexuality has existed in all times and places. In some cultures it has flourished as a source of spiritual expansion. The great Lesbian from whose birthplace the perversion is named is the poet Sappho, who lived in the sixth century on a lonely island to which she was exiled for political reasons. Ancient writers, who knew her work, agreed that she was a poet of the first importance. But only fragments of her work remain—love songs that mention the names of girls. During the Middle Ages tales of scandal grew about her name—she was a witch, a pervert, a suicide, a bitchy sister of a silly brother, a priestess-prostitute, a bluestocking, an androgyne, a pretty mother of a prettier daughter, a writer of cultist hymns. But copies of her poems are still being found in the sands of Egypt, and Greek scholars and modern poets collaborate to translate the bits and pieces.

About the end of World War Two, when Mr. Durrell was still learning his art, he wrote a drama titled *Sappho*, in which she appears as the central figure in a world at war as both victim and victor, as a loved and loving suffering woman. She is Clea, as Nancy is Clea.

Mr. Durrell and Nancy spent a honeymoon year on the little island of Corlcyra (1937-38), in an old fisherman's house, miles from a town, their only company rock, air, and sky. They bought a little

sailing boat in which they visited friends who read them letters from the great (Unamuno, Celine) and with whom they shared Henry Miller's exuberant letters from Paris, where they joined him later. In a long autobiographical poem, Mr. Durrell says, "Much later, moving in a dark, / Snow-lit landscape softly / In her small frock walked his daughter. . . ."

The beauty of these years is in *The Alexandria Quartet,* mixed with the violence and dirt and crime observed during the war years. The women in this great novel are a product, not only of one man's experience of life, but also of his experience of books: *Hamlet* and *Faust,* Rimbaud, Dostoyevsky, D. H. Lawrence, Blake, Tâo, St. Augustine, Shakespeare, Goethe, Freud, Dante and Homer, Wordsworth and Donne, Descartes and Rabelais. In the darkness that came to Europe, under bombs bursting like pods, he explored the past. "Within a time of reading," he says in a poem, "here is all my growth."

The women in Lawrence Durrell's novels live in a man's world, a painfully distorted world where there is no such thing as normal family life. There are no respectable fathers, no home-loving mothers; there are a few lovable father substitutes and several passionately maternal women who have been deprived in some fashion of the children who might have completed their lives. It is a cruel, pain-filled Dostoyevskian world which Mr. Durrell depicts in prewar Alexandria, that exotic melting-pot of racial types, but the heroines of the four novels refuse to be submerged in it. Each, in her own way, is four-dimensional in her roles of career-woman, mother, lover, person. The first three must somehow be integrated into the fourth if the woman is to know real happiness, and this goal of personality can be achieved only through effort. These women work for their happiness with the existentialist's belief that each individual must make his life, with the devotion of an early Christian working out his salvation.

Women should be grateful to Mr. Durrell for treating problems which affect them so closely in so frank and yet tender a manner. His studies of four women prove that he has a deep knowledge of feminine psychology. His own experience seems to have been happy, but his opportunities of observation have been wide. He has been married twice and has two daughters, one twenty and one ten. They

live in England but visit their father, who now lives in the south of France. The story of Darley living on an island with Melissa's child has a factual basis, for Mr. Durrell did live on an island with his young daughter. He tells us with what sorrow he left the record of their stay in Cyprus, where she had gathered "fragments of Roman glass, handles of Greek amphorae, broken tiles, sea-shells, empty birds' eggs." He dedicated a volume of *Selected Poems*: "To my two daughters Ping-Ku and Sappho Jane." A poem titled "To Ping-Ku, Asleep," ends with the question, "surely you won't ever / Be . . . disturbed by a poem / Made like fire by the rubbing of two sticks?"

There is no indication that Mr. Durrell has locked away his "fire sticks." It is doubtful if the canon is closed with *Clea*, or with the publication of the four novels in one volume as *The Alexandria Quartet*. There are still loose ends to tie in with our incomplete knowledge of reality. In the final pages of *Clea*, Justine is awakening to new life, as she sees a possibility of the renewal of the Hosnani fortunes—new matter, new manners, new intrigue. Clea's love story, and Darley's, are not yet complete. Nor is Dr. Balthazar at peace with his dentures. Doubtless there will be more details from Mr. Durrell's pen about these interesting, living characters. Sir David Mountolive's story is unfinished—his love for Liza only an extension of his love of Leila.

Perhaps, after all, neither Henry Miller, nor Sade, nor Dostoevsky has most influenced Mr. Durrell's style, but life and the *silence around him*, a silence opening now upon outer space even as it is penetrating more deeply into the psychic inner world of man. New maps are needed.

Tarzan of the Apes

By FREDERICK REBSAMEN

At seven, climbing seats in darkened rooms,
I watched him swing an arc through Africa,
Drink jungle-flavored water from a gourd,
Jerk stupid chimp from mouth of crocodile.

At ten, I ruled the neighborhood from trees,
Intimidating roof-tops with my screams,
And safe from hungry dog and garter snake,
Bellowed disdain of creeping chums below.

At fifteen, I moved on to busier jungle,
Forsook dull ropes and limbs for better game,
Stalked in roaring cars the giggling virgins,
Replaced my gourds and spears with shaving cream.

And now, at thirty-three, I climb once more,
Mount flights of stairs to huddle at this desk
And watch, through glass, the threatening tribes below:
Me English teacher. Me read compositions.

This is the first poem of FREDERICK REBSAMEN accepted for publication and its acceptance coincided with that of his first published short story by the *Kenyon Review*. A Ph.D. candidate at Columbia, Mr. Rebsamen teaches English at the University of Arizona.

Jack and the Beanstalk

By PATRICIA GOEDICKE

Our favorite sons are fools.
The best of them
the rollicking / stouthearted
kings
princes
movie stars
presidents
millionaires
scientists
all cool cats curiosity never killed
wallow in their ill-gotten gains.
They throw away like garbage
largesse for the meek good hearts who live
(safely, on solid ground)
their limp / incurious
unloved little lives.

For Jack the Giant Killer never would have climbed
up and up his magic beanstalk
panting, gasping among the green leaves
except he had a red-blood
true-blue
grasping excitement to find out
hunt up
the supreme top and pinnacle
the furthest peak
of his own ridiculously
blooming green mystery.

His Mother would have said
Come home, Jack, come home you'll get hurt
Leave the poor Giant alone
but Jack holds his breath
he swallows down his stomach
And Zip! he's got it!
sack full of wind
harp full of music
money bags money bags
and also and also
the little fat red stupid hen that lays
the whole wide world at his foolish feet.

PATRICIA GOEDICKE has had poems published in the *Kenyon Review*, the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Accent*, and elsewhere. She lives in Athens, Ohio, where her husband teaches at Ohio University.

From a Distance

By ROBERT BLOOM

Waste is a sure sign of the end or the beginning:
men, too, can be compost, and perhaps
someone, not a man, will rejoice in the ultimate
sunburst.
Meanwhile, the tadpole tickles,
skies darken, and aviators (who have instruments
better than buttocks) observe alien ships
magnifying our danger.
Earth is so young, so
rare. We are hardly used to our own mortality,
certainly not fond of it. What of this
crinkled planet discovering its ego, this infant
hulk in tantrum breathing back its smile?

Imperturbable, we pursue our dancetime cornucopias,
count the belly licks it takes to flush a dare;
where gray mechanics overhaul our catwalks, other
doctors rectify our stare.
The doom is engines.
High, high whine whimpering things: monkeys
(most like men) in bullet shapes, and men
(targetless, without trajectory) most like these
bullets. We pride ourselves in this: that
nature yield as woman.
Still, high, high speed
soundless things, now fluttering, now hovering.
Coronal lights bend low, echelon and soar.
Over a hundred cities the borealis flickers, and
a discus (that shape most easily borne aloft),
rides waves of what we do not know.
Shall nature
yield, or shall we yield to nature?

ROBERT BLOOM's poem, "Anger in Schoolchildren," appeared in our Summer '58 issue. A junior high school teacher in New York City, he has published verse in many of the literary journals.

Rosa Luxemburg and V. I. Lenin:
The Opposite Poles of Revolutionary Socialism

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE

■ Rosa Luxemburg and V. I. Lenin were born in the same year, 1870, and their lives were destined to touch and cross at many points. Though they were both called "revolutionary" socialists, their diverse temperaments and their differing attitudes on the nature of socialist leadership, on party organization, and on the initiative and self-activity of the working class kept them poles apart. Indeed, Rosa Luxemburg's best-known works are sharply critical appraisals of Lenin's penchant for personal dictatorship over his party, the dictatorship of his Central Committee over its locals, and the dictatorship of his party and its leaders over the working class and society as a whole. These critiques from Rosa Luxemburg's pen are among the most important works to have come out of the Socialist or Second International, for, without ever using the word or the concept "totalitarianism," Rosa Luxemburg had a prescient feeling for the totalitarian potential in Lenin's views. Today, as we look at the party and the state which Lenin founded, we can no longer doubt that in this controversy Rosa Luxemburg was prophetically right.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE is well known as a scholar of Communist philosophy and history. His work has appeared frequently in the *Review*, most recently in the Winter '58-'59 issue with "Marxism Today." The present article is taken from a study of Luxemburg and Lenin and their opposing views, written by Mr. Wolfe as an introduction to *The Russian Revolution* and *Leninism or Marxism?*, two of Luxemburg's works which will be published this fall in a single volume in the Ann Arbor Paperback Series for the Study of Communism and Marxism of the University of Michigan Press. Copyright © 1961 by the University of Michigan.

Portrait of Rosa Luxemburg

Most of the political life of Lenin and Luxemburg was lived out in the old pre-war Second International, founded in 1899, which collapsed in the holocaust of war in 1914. That vanished world of international socialism possessed no more original, ardent, dynamic, and attractive figure than that of Rosa Luxemburg.

She was born in an "enlightened" Jewish merchant's family in the small town of Zamosc, in Russian Poland, near the Russian border.[1] To say then that a Jewish family was "enlightened" was to suggest that it had broken out of the circle of ghetto culture and traditions and absorbed the general culture of the country. Rosa's parents were at home in Polish, Russian, and German literature and thought. This cosmopolitan background made the young girl take easily to internationalism. Lenin, too, used the term "internationalist" frequently. But, whereas she was to be active and a leader in the affairs of three parties, the Polish, the Russian, and the German, and in the International Congresses and Bureau, Lenin, wherever he lived, remained a Russian in exile, with gaze fixed on Russian affairs and Russian party squabbles.

Physically, the girl Rosa did not seem made to be a tragic heroine or a leader of men. A childhood hip ailment had left her body twisted, frail, and slight. She walked with an ungainly limp. But when she spoke, what people saw were her large, expressive eyes (beautiful eyes, judging by her photographs) glowing with compassion, sparkling with laughter, burning with combativeness, flashing with irony and scorn. When she took the floor at congresses or meetings, her slight frame seemed to grow taller and more commanding. Her voice was warm and vibrant (a good singing voice, too), her wit deadly, her arguments wide ranging and addressed, as a rule, more to the intelligence than to the feelings of her auditors.

She had been a precocious child, gifted with many talents. All her life, to the day of her murder in January, 1919, she was tempted

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[1] Thus, like so many of the self-constituted socialist leaders, or would-be leaders, of the working class, neither Lenin, whose father had earned hereditary nobility and whose maternal grandfather had land and peasants, nor Luxemburg, whose father was a well-to-do merchant, was of proletarian origin.

and tormented by longings to diminish her absorption in politics in order to develop to the full the many other capacities of her spirit. Unlike so many political figures, her inner life, as expressed in her letters, her activities, her enthusiasms, reveals a rounded human being. She drew and painted, read great literature in Russian, Polish, German, and French, wrote poetry in the first three of these, continued to be seduced by an interest in anthropology, history, botany, geology, and others of the arts and sciences into which the modern specialized intellect is fragmented. "Interest" is but a cold word for the ardor with which she pursued her studies. A passage from one of her letters written from prison to a young friend, Dr. Hans Diefenbacker, in the Spring of 1917 will suffice to give an inkling of this passion:

> How glad I am that three years ago I suddenly threw myself into botanizing, as I do into all things, with all my ardor, with the whole of me, so that for me the world, the party and the work vanished, and one single passion filled me day and night: to tramp about out there in the fields of spring, to fill my arms full of plants, then, back at home, to systematize them, put them in order, identify them, enter them in notebooks. How I lived in a fever all that Spring, how I suffered when I sat before some little plant and could not ascertain what it was and where it belonged! . . . In return for that now I am at home in the green world, I have conquered it for myself—in storm and passion—and whatever one seizes upon thus with ardor has firm roots in one.

It would not be amiss to suggest that this longing "to conquer in storm and passion" was what made Rosa Luxemburg a "revolutionary" rather than a "reformist" socialist.

Having been brought up in Russian Poland at a time when its intellectuals were "discovering Marx," her initiation into the revolutionary movement was precocious, too. At sixteen, when she graduated at the top of her class from the girls' gymnasium in Warsaw, she was denied the gold medal because of "an oppositional attitude towards the authorities." Three years later, at the tender age of nineteen, she had to flee to Switzerland to avoid arrest, aided both by a Catholic priest, who was given to understand that she was escaping from her parents to undergo conversion, and by an underground Polish movement.[2]

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[2] It was the only time she fled arrest. Thereafter she was to take prison terms as part of her work.

At Zurich she made simultaneous entrance into the world of refugee politics and the University. At the latter she won two doctorates, one in law, the other in philosophy, acquiring at the same time her lifelong interest in a half dozen other disciplines. She got to know Plekhanov, Axelrod, Lenin, and other Russian exiles, and three Polish exiles who worked with her thenceforward, Marchlewski, Warszawski, and Jogiches.

Leo Jogiches, three years older than Rosa, was, when he fled to Zurich in 1890, already a fully formed conspirator and revolutionary. Almost immediately, they became linked by a lifelong personal intimacy (without benefit of religious or civil ceremony) and by a lifelong association in the Polish and Russian, and later in the German, movements. The two were as different as two people engaged in a shared life and common enterprise could be. Jogiches was taciturn, stern, gloomy, secretive about his past and his private life, with none of her eloquence or outgoing capacity for friendship. Moreover, he was, as she was not, a consummate conspirator, an able organizer, a natural born faction fighter. Under the conditions of underground life in Poland and Russia, it is doubtful if she could have built a movement without him. She was the ideologist, he the organizer and conspirator. In Germany, however, where life was lived more publicly, he became a leader only by following in her wake.

Switzerland was too small and peaceful, the political life of a Russian-Polish exile too confined, to give scope to her large talents and aspirations. She went for a while to France, where it is a measure of the breadth of her personal criteria that she was able to form friendships both with the outstanding Marxist leader, Vaillant, and with the great leader of the socialist "right," Jean Jaurès. "A splendid human being," she said of the latter, "open, natural, overflowing with inner warmth and intelligence." Her glowing temperament was closer to that of the humane, warmhearted Jaurès than to the more dogmatic Vaillant, the pedantic Kautsky, or the narrow, dictatorial Lenin.

The French movement, too, was too small to hold her, so she headed for Germany, the land where the "party of Marx and Engels" was the largest political party in the country and the largest and most

influential in the international socialist movement. As a foreigner, she would find it impossible to become publicly active in Germany, so she proposed "marriage" to Gustav Luebeck, son of an old German socialist family she knew. After the wedding ceremony, the "couple" separated at the door of the marriage bureau, and "Frau Rosa Luebeck," a name she never used except to legitimatize her political activity, was free to plunge into the doctrinal and tactical disputes, the mass activities, the addressing of meetings and congresses, the writing for theoretical and popular journals. But not for that did she abandon her Polish and Russian activities, for this frail woman had enough overflowing spirits for three parties.

Almost at the outset she rose to the top of the great German party. She became a contributor to the theoretical organ, *Neue Zeit*, then assistant to its founder and editor, Karl Kautsky. She added her touch of fire to his doctrinaire fight against the "revision" of "orthodox" Marxism. She contributed to and became an editor of provincial dailies, then of the daily central organ, *Vorwaerts*. She got into the Vorstand (Executive), where even the veteran Bebel treated with respect her ardor, learning, wit, and sharp tongue. She became the teacher of Marxian economics at the Central Party Training School. Unlike other German pundits, who did little more than repeat Marx's formulae in "new" works, she developed first an original, mildly heretical interpretation of the labor theory of value,[3] then ventured to cross swords with Marx himself in a critical appraisal and revision of the master's arid and weak Second Volume of *Das Kapital*.[4] Finally, from 1905 on, this redoubtable woman ("one of the last two remaining *men* in the German Social Democratic Party," she once said of herself to Bebel[5]) became a leader of an

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[3] In her lectures, published posthumously in 1924 as "Einfuehrung in die Nationaloekonomie."

[4] This was the subject of her "Die Akkumulation des Kapitals: Ein Beitrag zur oekonomischen Erklaerung des Imperialismus," Berlin, 1913. In this writer's judgment, her schemata are as far from economic reality as those of Marx which she was criticizing, but, be that as it may, hers is a work of undeniable originality and intellectual force, which has had a great influence on subsequent Marxist writing from Lenin's "Imperialism" to the various works of Fritz Sternberg.

[5] The "other man" was her friend and disciple, Klara Zetkin!

extreme left wing which considered even the veterans of Marxist "orthodoxy," Kautsky and Bebel, to be a mere "center" to her "left."

Lenin and Luxemburg as "Revolutionary Socialists"

When Rosa Luxemburg was murdered by Prussian officers in January, 1919, while being taken to prison, the Leninists laid claim to her martyrdom, her tradition, and her name. On the surface, this seemed a plausible claim. For both Lenin and Luxemburg regarded themselves as "revolutionary socialists." What they meant by this was that they rejected root and branch the society in which they lived, denied that it could be reformed or made better in any meaningful fashion, insisted that it must be overthrown in a great upheaval and replaced by a totally new society. One of Rosa Luxemburg's notable pamphlets, "Reform or Revolution," (first published as two articles in the *Leipziger Volkzeitung* in 1898 and 1899) was an attempt to prove that modern industrial society, the most rapidly changing in history, could not be fundamentally altered or improved except by a social revolution, and that such reforms as had been instituted were a byproduct of the revolutionary movement rather than voluntary acts of society to remove abuses and redress grievances. Legislation, constitutions, codified rights were but the "vegetative stage of society"; its "creative stage" was only and exclusively social revolution.

Both Lenin and Luxemburg were doctrinaire "lefts," too, in their rejection of the activities of the organized workingmen aiming at improving their conditions of life *within* the framework of industrial (or, as they preferred to say, "capitalist") society. Both denied the possibility of any long term improvement. Both had a low opinion of trade unions and of parliamentary activity. Neither could ever understand why workingmen in general were not more attracted to the historic "mission" which Marxism had assigned them; why workers had no stomach for being reduced to "nought" the better to prepare themselves for becoming "all."[6] They never noticed

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[6] Cf. the lines of the socialist song, *The International*: "Arise ye slaves, no more in thrall, / The earth shall rise on new foundations, / We have been nought, we shall be all!"

nor understood that it was *against being reduced to nought* that the real workers' struggle was directed.

It was their common underestimation and misprision of the changes going on in industrial society, their common low opinion of reforms, and of trade union and parliamentary activities, that linked Lenin and Luxemburg together as "left" or "revolutionary" socialists. But here the resemblance between these two dissimilar temperaments ceases.

Attitude Towards War

Their two names have also been linked by their opposition to the War of 1914-18. But Lenin thought that a European war would be "a useful trick for the revolution" and "doubted that Nikolasha and Franz Josef will give us that pleasure."[7] He welcomed war when it came, as "putting the bayonet on the order of the day," marking the longed for transition from the era of walking with "thin and weak soles on the civilized sidewalks of provincial cities" to the era that required "thick, hob-nailed boots" to climb the mountains. One of the "huge advantages" of any war, he said, was that it "mercilessly revealed, exposed and destroyed much that is rotten, outlived, moribund in human institutions."[8]

In contrast with his fierce exultation that bayonets were now on the order of the day, war came to Rosa Luxemburg as a burden of grief and anguish. The failure of the International to prevent it, or even decently to oppose it, above all the war-drunkenness of the ordinary socialist workers, plunged her into despair; for a time she seriously contemplated suicide. She sought to have the shattered International purify itself by merciless criticism of its errors, re-establish the broken ties of solidarity across the frontiers, sober up the war drunk masses, and unite them for a common struggle to bring about an early and a just peace.

"The slogan of peace," Lenin declared, "is stupid and wrong.... It signifies philistine moaning...."

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[7] Letter to Gorky during the Balkan Wars, out of which grew the world war ("V. I. Lenin i A. M. Gorkii," Moscow, 1958, p. 91).

[8] Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian Edition, Vol. XXI, pp. 184 and 222.

And again: "The slogan of peace is wrong—the slogan must be, turn the imperialist war into civil war."[9] Luxemburg above all wanted the war to stop. Lenin wanted the war prolonged until the old order was in ruins, then prolonged further by its conversion into a universal civil war. Rosa Luxemburg was most concerned with the sufferings of the masses in war; Lenin with mobilizing their hatred. She wrote sadly of their chauvinistic madness; Lenin closed his eyes to, even denied, their chauvinism, picturing them as "betrayed by their leaders." She wished the International to be won back to its old pre-war position, restored and purified. He proposed that the International be split, and a Third or Communist International built on its ruins. When he used his control of Russia in 1918 to call a conference to found a new International, her movement sent a delegation instructed to oppose its formation. But at that moment, her murderers silenced her voice. She was an ardent fighter for her views but not by choice a splitter. Lenin's method had always been to fight for his views by splitting whatever he did not control.

"Leninism or Marxism?"

The work published under the above title is made up of two articles Rosa Luxemburg wrote in 1904, against Lenin's organization views and organization plan. The title is not hers. She called her articles, more modestly and matter-of-factly, "Organizational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy." They were published simultaneously in Russian in *Iskra* and in German in *Neue Zeit*. They have since been republished in many languages as a pamphlet, under varying titles. In English, the United Workers Party published such a pamphlet some time in the twenties; then a fresh translation was made from *Neue Zeit* in 1934 by *Integer*, who entitled the pamphlet, "Revolutionary Socialist Organization." Yet another version was published in 1935 in Glasgow, Scotland, by the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation, which gave it the title, "Leninism or Marxism?"

In two pamphlets, and a number of articles published between 1902 and 1904, Lenin had been hammering away at his new organi-

[9] Lenin, Vol. 35, pp. 121 and 125.

zation plan for a "party of a new type," i.e., one differing fundamentally from all previous Marxian parties, whether those founded while Marx and Engels were alive, or since. Besides Rosa Luxemburg, many other Marxists active in the Russian movement published their criticism of his view; among them Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov, and Trotsky.

Reduced to its bare outlines, Lenin advanced the following propositions:

1. Left to its own devices and insights, the working class is incapable of developing any conception of the "historic mission" which Marx assigned to it. "The *spontaneous* development of the workers' movement leads precisely to its subordination to bourgeois ideology . . . the ideological enslavement of the workers to the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, Vol. V, pp. 355-56. Italics here and throughout as in the original.) What the workers' movement spontaneously concerns itself with is a "petty-bourgeois" matter, the price at which it sells the goods it possesses, namely its labor power. It wants but to get the best price and the best terms under the present "bourgeois" system. To do this it may fight the employers and even the state, but it will never develop the "socialist consciousness" necessary to its "historic mission."

2. Such "socialist consciousness"

> can only be brought to the workers from the outside. . . . Alone, by their own forces, the working class is capable of developing a pure-and-simple trade union consciousness. . . . But the teachings of socialism have grown out of the philosophical, historical, economic theories which were worked out by the educated representatives of the possessing classes. . . . (Vol. V, pp. 347-48).

3. For this the working class needs a party which is not made up of the working class but a party of guardians, a self-constituted vanguard *for* the working class; an élite party drawn from all classes, made up primarily of declassed revolutionary intellectuals, who have made revolution their profession. This party should lead and guide the working class, inject its doctrine into the workers, infiltrate the workingmen's organizations and struggles, and seek to use them for its purposes. Only "bourgeois politicians," Lenin wrote, "can believe that the task of a socialist is to serve the workers in *their* struggles. The task of the socialist politician is "not to assist the economic

struggle of the proletariat, but to make the economic struggle assist the socialist movement and the victory of the revolutionary party." (Vol. IV, p. 273.)

4. This classless élite, since it does the thinking for the workingmen and seeks to inject its consciousness into them, can appear even in countries where the working class is backward and weak. It is an élite which is drawn from all classes and must penetrate all classes (not only the working class), "dictating" to all classes; "dictating a positive program of action, alike to rebellious students, to dissatisfied Zemstvo figures [i.e. leaders of the rural liberal nobility], to discontented religious sectaries, to indignant school teachers, etc." (Vol. V, p. 398). In short, it is to speak in the name of the working class; it is to use that numerous and closely packed class as its main battering ram in its struggle for power, but is itself to supply the doctrine, the watchwords, the purposes, the commands. It calls itself the "vanguard of the working class" because it brings to, nay injects into, the working class its own consciousness of that class's "historic mission." But it is to be, no less, the overseer for the whole of society, the "dictator of the program" of all classes of society. In this bold, crude, repetitious hammering home of his ruthless doctrine, thus early can we discern the outlines of Lenin's future "dictatorship of the proletariat" over the proletariat and over society as a whole.

5. Such a "party of a new type" needs an organization of a new type. It should be organized like an army, have the unquestioning military discipline of an army, be centralized like an army, with all power and authority residing in its "general staff" or Central Committee. The Central Committee should plan, the local branches execute. The Central Committee should decide all general questions, the branches merely discuss how to grasp those decisions and carry them out. The Central Committee should have the right to form branches, dissolve them, purge them, appoint their leaders, eliminate, even exterminate the unworthy (Vol. V, p. 448; VI, pp. 211-15 and 221-23; VII, pp. 365-66.)

The workers, schooled by life in factory and barracks, would take naturally to this. They have no time for "the toy forms of democracy." Bureaucracy and centralism in organization are truly revolutionary; democracy in party matters, however, is "opportunism in the organization question."

This last epithet shows that for his new dogmas Lenin was creating new transgressions, which required new names. Among them was *khvostism* (tailism, from Russian *khvost*, a tail), which meant that instead of directing, leading, pushing, and injecting your own purposes into the workers, you seek merely to serve them and their purposes, hence "dragging at their tail." A kindred offense was "slavish kowtowing before spontaneity." (Vol. V, pp. 350-58.)

Rosa Luxemburg was offended in her whole being by Lenin's worship of centralism, his implicit contempt for the working class, its own creative impulses and purposes, and his distrust of all spontaneous developments and spontaneity itself. It is here that her pamphlet joins issue with him.

Her polemical tone is, for her, remarkably gentle. She breaks a lance against his "pitiless ultra-centralism." She rightly pictures his future party as one in which the Central Committee can and will perpetuate itself, dictate to the party, and have the party dictate to the masses. The Central Committee would "be the only thinking element," the entire party and the masses being reduced to mere "executing limbs." She reminds him how many times in recent history the masses had shown "spontaneous creativeness," surprising the party, making a mockery of its pedantic formulae and recipes. With a marvellous sensitivity to what is in the air (this is 1904 and the storms of 1905 are approaching), she predicts that the masses will soon take the party leaders by surprise once more, again showing their own multiform creativeness and again overflowing the narrow channels of party prescription.

She closes with a plea for the autonomy of the masses, respect for their spontaneity and creativeness, respect also for their right to make their own mistakes and be helped by them. Her polemic ends with the words, so often quoted: "Let us speak plainly. Historically, the errors committed by a truly revolutionary movement are infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of the cleverest Central Committee."

"The Russian Revolution"

Nearly a quarter of a century passed. Lenin's party developed in the direction which Rosa Luxemburg had foreseen. In 1917, un-

expectedly to all the socialist movements, the weak Tsar Nicholas II, having exhausted all social supports from Grand Dukes down, fell from power. For many months the real power was in the moods, whims, and will of millions of armed peasants in uniform, possessed by the idea of seizing the land, deserting the front, ending the war.

A Provisional Government arose, without any real apparatus of administration or enforcement, recognizing all the freedoms which Rosa believed in but holding that Russia was not "ripe" for socialism and that the cruel war must somehow be continued until Russia was safe from the invader and a general peace arrived at.

The real power remained "in the streets." By extreme appeals to demagogy, and by use of his tightly disciplined armed conspiracy calling itself a party, Lenin in November, 1917 was able to seize power "as easily as lifting up a feather" (Lenin, Vol. XXVII, p. 76).

From her prison cell, on the basis of oral accounts from visitors, scraps of news in German and Russian newspapers smuggled into her cell, Rosa began a short, friendly, yet necessarily critical, appraisal of what was happening in Russia. She intended it for publication as one of her underground *Spartacus Letters.* The "Letter," like its author, was to have a tragic history.

The little pamphlet was never altogether finished. On November 9, 1918, a democratic revolution in Germany opened the doors of Rosa Luxemburg's prison. She stepped out into a world she had not made and found herself "at the head" of a movement which looked to her for leadership but, being drunk with the heady wine of Lenin's success, could no longer comprehend her voice nor follow her lead. They had been so "Russified" that her differences with them were now of the same order, if not the same magnitude, as her differences with Lenin. Yet because they considered her their responsible leader, she felt constrained to follow where they rushed.

In Germany elections were being held for a Constituent Assembly to write a new constitution for the new Germany. As a believer in democracy, she naturally assumed that her party (then calling itself *Spartakus* or the Spartacans) would contest these universal, democratic elections. But Lenin in Russia had dispersed by force of arms a democratically elected Constituent Assembly, proclaiming instead a "Government of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils"—in actual fact, a government of his party. Rosa's "followers" outvoted

her, deciding to boycott the elections to the German Constituent Assembly and proclaim a "Government of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils" of Germany. Her party dragged its reluctant leaders in its wake.

A week after her release from prison, in the first issue of their new paper, *Rote Fahne* (dated Nov. 18, 1918), she made a solemn pledge to the masses:

> The Spartacus League will never take over governmental power in any other way than through the clear, unambiguous will of the great majority of the proletarian masses in all Germany, never except by virtue of their conscious assent to the views, aims, and fighting methods of the Spartacus League.

But in the third week of December, the masses, as represented in the First National Congress of the Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, rejected by an overwhelming majority the Spartacan motion that the Councils should disrupt the Constituent Assembly and the Provisional Democratic Government and seize power themselves.

In the light of Rosa's public pledge, the duty of her movement seemed clear: to accept the decision, or to seek to have it reversed not by force but by persuasion. However, on the last two days of 1918 and the first of 1919, the Spartacans held a convention of their own where they outvoted their "leader" once more. In vain did she try to convince them that to oppose both the Councils and the Constituent Assembly with their tiny forces was madness and a breaking of their democratic faith. They voted to try to take power in the streets, that is by armed uprising. Almost alone in her party, Rosa Luxemburg decided with a heavy heart to lend her energy and her name to their effort.

The *Putsch*,[10] with inadequate forces and overwhelming mass disapproval except in Berlin, was as she had predicted, a fizzle. But neither she nor her close associates fled for safety as Lenin had done in July, 1917. They stayed in the capital, hiding carelessly in easily suspected hideouts, trying to direct an orderly retreat. On January 16, a little over two months after she had been released from prison, Rosa Luxemzurg was seized, along with Karl Liebknecht and Wilhelm

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[10] A German term for a *coup d'etat* attempted behind the back or without the support of the majority of the people.

Pieck. Reactionary officers murdered Liebknecht and Luxemburg while "taking them to prison." Pieck was spared, to become, as the reader knows, one of the puppet rulers of Moscow-controlled East Germany today.

Leo Jogiches spent the next few days exposing the murder, until his arrest. He was taken to the Moabit Prison, where Radek, Lenin's emissary to the Spartacans and to any German forces which the Russian ruler "might do business with," was also taken. On March 10, Jogiches was dragged out and murdered, but Radek, armored by investiture with a fragment of Lenin's governmental power, was permitted to sit in his cell, holding court for German officers and German heavy industrialists as well as German Communists, and beginning the negotiations which led to the Reichswehr-Red Army secret military agreement, foreshadow of the future Stalin-Hitler Pact. In its way, the fate of the Russian emissary Radek and the "Russified" Pieck on the one hand, and that of Rosa Luxemburg on the other, are fitting symbols of the differences between Luxemburg's and Lenin's conceptions of the relationship between socialist principles and power.[11]

Rosa Luxemburg's little treatise on the Russian Revolution continued to have a pathetic career. The growing subordination of the Spartacan Movement, germ of the future Communist Party, to Lenin and Russian Communism, caused her friends to suppress her work. They said that she had "lacked adequate information," that it was "untimely" to publish it (it is still "untimely" for them today!), nor did they scruple to say that she had "changed her mind" on her views of a lifetime as expressed in it.

When the censorship by her own comrades was at last broken, it was by one of her closest associates, Paul Levi. But he published the pamphlet only when he was breaking with Lenin and Leninism out of disgust with another attempted *Putsch* and disgust with Lenin,

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[11] For an account of the secret agreement initiated by Radek and Von Seeckt, see Hilger and Meyer, "The Incompatible Allies," New York, 1953; Kochan, "Russia and the Weimar Republic," Cambridge, England, 1954; Gerald Freund, "Unholy Alliance," New York, 1957; Hans W. Gatzke, "Russo-German Military Collaboration During the Weimar Republic," in *The American Historical Review*, April, 1958, pp. 565-597.

who secretly agreed with him but for reasons of political expediency publicly excoriated him for his open criticism of his party's errors. Zealous young Communists were told that he was violating Rosa Luxemburg's cherished wish to have it suppressed, and that they would read it only at their soul's peril. The Social Democrats took it up, both in Germany and in France, where it was published in *Le Populaire* in 1922, but the Communists read only distorting commentaries and refutations. The unfortunate little classic was made a faction football and kicked around until it disappeared from view.

The disease which Rosa had foreseen as inseparable from a Russian and Lenin-dominated International did indeed infect the Comintern. As its "Stalinization" in the middle and late twenties extruded one group after another of the original founders, the Communist "splinter groups" thus arising felt the need of understanding the process of the decay of the Communist International from a supposed international association of brother parties into an agency of the Russian State, Party, and Dictator. Both Rosa's 1904 articles on the Leninist organization plan and her critical appraisal of the Russian Revolution were revived once more.

In the course of the thirties, "The Russian Revolution" was republished in German in Paris by an exile group called *Neuer Weg*; in French in a translation by Maurice Olivier; and sections of it in English, translated by *Integer*, were published in his *International Review*, New York. In 1928, the first textually scientific edition was published in German by Felix Weill of the Institut fuer Sozialforschung in Gruenberg's *Archiv fuer die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*. It is this version, supplemented by a variorum study of all other versions in German, French and English, which the author of the present article used in 1940 for a new English language translation, published then by the Workers Age Publishers, New York.

Her Appraisal of the Russian Revolution

All around her, the Russian Revolution was regarded with blind hatred or blind idolatry. But in the darkness of her prison cell, in a land made doubly dark by war and by her movement's betrayal of its pledges, she did not let the light she thought she descried in the

Eastern sky blind her to the dangers inherent in Lenin's method of seizing and using power.

The great service of the Bolsheviks, she thought, was to have "put socialism on the order of the day," to have begun to feel for a way out of the shambles of war, to have redeemed the tarnished honor of international socialism. But this was no model revolution carried on under model laboratory conditions. It had occurred in the midst of war and alien invasion, in a backward land, cursed with poverty, lacking in a democratic tradition, ill-equipped economically and culturally for the building of a "higher" social order. "It would be a crazy idea to think that every last thing done and left undone under such abnormal conditions should represent the very pinnacle of perfection. . . ."

Socialism Inseparable from Democracy

The heart of her pamphlet, as of her activities and teachings, lay in her unshakeable belief in the initiative and capacity of the mass of mankind. That had been the real principle of her disagreement with Lenin in 1904 as it was now, two months before her death. To her the health-giving force of socialism was an attempt to extend democracy still further, to strengthen the pulse-beat of public life, to awaken hitherto inert masses to activity, to awareness of their own capacities for achievement and correction of their own errors, to initiative for the direct, popular solution of all problems, to the assumption of control over "their own" party, "their own" state machine, over industry, and over their own destinies.

There were more contradictory elements in her broad view than in Lenin's narrow authoritarian conception, for she knew too much of revolutions and was too much a revolutionary to reject the employment of a temporary dictatorship to defend the "new order" from overthrow by its yet existent enemies. But she regarded such dictatorship as an evil, even if under some circumstances a necessary one, an evil to be mitigated as much as possible by making it as temporary as possible and limiting its scope as far as possible, while offsetting its dictatorial potential by greatly extending its exact opposite and antidote, freedom. The one hope of preventing a degeneration of a revolution even in its victory lay to her mind in the simultaneous

enormous extension of democracy and freedom to the widest possible number of human beings.

> Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party—however numerous they may be—is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of "justice" but because all that is instructive, wholesome, and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when "freedom" becomes a special privilege.

Is there any regime which loves liberty which could not be proud to engrave these three sentences over the portals of its public buildings?

As a socialist, she wanted socialism introduced, but she knew that her ideal of socialism could not be introduced without the widest possible democracy and freedom. No party, she felt, had a monopoly of wisdom, or a filing cabinet full of ready-made solutions to the thousands of new problems that would present themselves in the course of carrying on an "old order" and still more in the course of trying to institute a "new." The actual solutions were to her neither a matter of authority nor prescription but of endless experiment, of fruitful trial and error, and fruitful correction or error.

> Socialism by its very nature cannot be introduced by *ukase*. . . . Only unobstructed, effervescing life falls into a thousand new forms and improvisations, brings to light creative force, itself corrects all mistaken attempts.

Her "worship of spontaneity," her rejection of authoritarianism, were farther apart from Lenin's views than ever. The difference of 1904 had grown as the occasion for their expression had grown. How prophetic do her words sound now, forty-three years after they were written:

> With the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the Soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinions, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality, only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an elite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where

> they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously—at bottom then, a clique affair—a dictatorship to be sure, not however of the proletariat but only of a handful of politicians. . . . Such conditions must inevitably cause a brutalization of public life: attempted assassinations, shooting of hostages, etc.

Much of what Rosa Luxemburg wrote in this little pamphlet is now hopelessly dated, for much of it stems from dogmas which would not bear examination and have not resisted the passage of time. Yet how much of the forty-three years of subsequent Soviet development did she foresee in the darkness of her prison cell! How alive is her love of liberty, and her astonishing ability to put into memorable words that love of freedom! It is these qualities, along with her astonishing powers of foresight of where ruthless dictatorship would lead, that make her four-decade-old, unfinished pamphlet of more than merely biographical and historical interest. It is, as it has come to be widely recognized, a classic of that now vanished Marxian socialist movement in which she was so ardent a crusader.

Poem

By JUSTIN McCALLER

Slow death, love,
rock's outcrop.

The rain comes,
Knocks or scrubs
The world
with its teeth.

JUSTIN McCALLER, a young painter, has lived all his life on Signal Mountain, Tennessee. He has published poetry in *New World Writing* and *Poetry London-New York*.

The House on the Northeast Hill

By MERRILL POLLACK

■ Thomas Preval built one house during his lifetime. It was sound and pleasing and excellently crafted, and Thomas felt that that was all a house had to be. But, as if fate, or chance, or whatever you call it had singled Thomas out for a test of his faith, the house became a ruin long before it had fulfilled its life and expectations. In the course of normal events a house built on a firm foundation, constructed with devotion, and finished with love could be expected to outlast its builder, stand after him as a monument to his integrity.

Thomas felt this so strongly that he disregarded tradition and the gloomy predictions of his friends and put his house in a high place that pleased him mightily, even though everyone warned him against it. He was not an artisan when he began. All he started with was a strong desire to be near Forton, but not part of it, and to stay there for the remainder of his life. He knew the people of Forton and liked them, but he was aware of the differences between himself and the others, too. For they were valley people in fact and in outlook and they felt uneasy up in the unproductive, rocky heights where farming was impossible and any other way of life difficult at best. Thomas, on the other hand, was willing to accept these disadvantages because he felt his greatest freedom and zest up in the hills.

He had grown up in Forton, an unassuming village consisting of a score of placid homes arranged in a small, fertile valley that was girdled by four, massive, round-shouldered hills which were themselves the first ring of a vast surrounding area of even greater hills.

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Thomas' mother had died when he was seven years old and his father, Martin Preval, a cobbler, had managed in his kind and garrulous roughness to care for the boy and ease him along towards manhood. They got along well, and the father's craft provided them with their needs. Martin Preval made shoes and boots and repaired them, too. He was adept at fashioning and fixing harnesses for the farmers living in and near the valley. People came to him when they needed something made of leather and they called on him for help when their leather goods needed repairing.

Thomas grew up in his father's house, learned at an early age to cook passable meals for them both, learned a variety of domestic techniques to keep their house reasonably presentable and adequately clean. He went to school, he had boy companionship for game playing in the village and rambles through the meadows. But he went alone for the most part on his scrambles around the four desolate hills surrounding Forton. Those hikes were solitary because his friends simply would not join him more than once or twice. They were valley-oriented and, like their parents, or possibly because of their mothers and fathers, they felt that there was something essentially inhospitable about the heights.

When Thomas was not away on an adventure of his own, he kept his father company in the cobbler shop. He helped out by keeping the place tidy and he learned to use his father's sharp knives and awls and punches and curved needles; he learned of the nature of leather and how to use it and acquired a solemn respect for honest craftsmanship.

Thomas grew. His body lengthened and then filled out and, even then, in his looks and temperament, it was clear that he was not like the other valley boys. He was leaner and more intense than his friends, less gregarious. And he never outgrew his taste for the heights; he spent all his free time on the hilltops. The elder townspeople did not disapprove; they merely thought that Thomas was odd and a bit on the wild side. Some put it down to his lack of a mother and some said it was because his father was too easy-going. Whatever the cause, there was no denying that Thomas seemed more adventurous than his contemporaries, less willing to accept the valley customs and attitudes.

At any rate, at the age of fourteen, Thomas turned to the village

for a trade. There was little for him, one grocery store, one hardware store. He looked outwards then, to the valley farms. He found work now and then and was paid sometimes in coin, sometimes in produce. He chopped wood, cleaned barns, helped plow, assisted at harvest time. It was a good kind of work and it pleased Thomas and he talked vaguely of wanting a farm of his own some day. The valley people could understand such an ambition, of course, and those who thought about it all agreed that Thomas' unfathomable love for the heights would be sensibly tempered by the time he was older.

Then, when Thomas was sixteen, already done with whatever learning was available in the Forton school, his father suffered a stroke and lay paralyzed and speechless for two months. Thomas did some of the more simple cobbling jobs to keep a trickle of money coming in and he spent the rest of his time with his father, caring for him and mourning in advance, for he felt that his father would not survive for long. One midnight, while Thomas sat dozing in a chair at his father's bedside, he was awakened by the sound of deep sighs. He came awake and, in the light of a kerosene lantern suspended from the ceiling, saw his father looking up at him alertly.

"Yes, pa," Thomas said.

Martin Preval still could not speak, but he managed to work his face muscles into a smile of radiant encouragement and then he closed his eyes for good, dying with a peaceful expression.

After the burial Thomas returned all the unfinished work that remained in his father's shop. He packed Martin Preval's tools in a large wooden box and left it in the storage room of the grocery store for safekeeping. Then he waited to see what the villagers thought should be done with him. The only relative Thomas had ever heard his father mention lived far off, across the country, and neither Thomas nor the neighbors pursued that lead for long. Then there was talk of sending Thomas to an orphanage until he came of legal age.

Thomas avoided that dismal solution simply by leaving Forton one evening before anything had been decided, and this was another indication of his independence, because most youngsters at such a time would have been grateful for any adult help. Thomas had no physical possessions to keep him. The house he and his father had lived in was rented; its few furnishings were old and not worth sav-

ing. Thomas gathered all the family photographs he could find, put them in a bundle with a few pieces of clothing and, on a clear, cold night, wearing a pair of stout shoes his father had made for him less than six months previously, he set off alone on the road to the city, twenty-eight miles away. It was not a farewell to Forton. He loved his home village and promised himself that some day he would return. But for the time being it seemed sensible to leave.

When he returned five years later he was full-grown and pleasant to look upon: tall and muscular with a bland, open face and thick, curly black hair. In his years away he had lost some of his intensity and had gained the rich, easy laugh of a mature, self-confident person. He returned as unencumbered as he had left, wearing plain working-man's clothes, the shoes his father had made for him (still serviceable, though repaired a few times) and a small canvas pack on his shoulders. He visited around the village to let old friends know he was back and they welcomed him warmly, feeling that if he had bothered to come back to the valley at all, he was, indeed, one of them. Thomas told them what he'd done while he was away. He'd had many jobs—as a laborer on a road construction crew, as a lumberjack, as a fireman in a bakery, as a farmhand, as a plumber's helper, as an assistant mechanic in a garage. He'd learned a fair bit about gasoline engines and now that automobiles were fairly common (even Forton had a service station by the time Thomas Preval returned) he thought he might have found himself a livelihood. He'd done a lot and seen a lot but it was clear that Thomas was glad to be back at the place he called home. And, he told his friends, he could count himself as a person of some substance, too. He had saved some money while he was gone. He had four hundred dollars.

The day after he returned to Forton, Thomas went to the village garage and after some lengthy talking with the owner, Simon Sheets, a fat, perpetually grease-stained man, he found himself employed at a satisfactory wage. He rented a room in a boarding house and settled into the easy routine of life in Forton.

Soon it was apparent that Thomas' scale of values had not changed radically for, although he had returned home, he still disdained the valley proper. In the long summer evenings after he was done working, Thomas went on long walks outside the village, cutting through familiar fields, climbing the four big hills and

beyond, reacquainting himself with his old haunts, it seemed to the villagers. Thomas climbed each hill several times and passed the sunsets up above, studying the valley. On Sundays he prowled the hills, too, carefully, and after a few weeks the villagers realized that Thomas had more in mind than sentimental idleness. For they noticed that Thomas began spending all his free time on the northeast hill, the highest of the four and also the closest one to Forton—two miles from the center of the village and more than a quarter of a mile uphill. It was easily the most impressive of the four hills. The side nearest Forton rose sharply, and its tree-covered brow was generously covered with a rock deposit. Many man-sized boulders lay among the trees, and millions of smaller rocks and stones competed with the grass and ground-plants for a chance at the sun and sky. The hill was owned by a farmer named Ellis, who had little use for it, for it was too rocky for cultivation and too steep for his cattle to graze on safely. Thomas Preval sought him out and talked of this and that and finally let Ellis know that, if Ellis might want to sell, he, Thomas, might be interested in buying a bit of the hilltop, just a patch near a spring, for a home site. They chewed this over and talked of other things and hashed the real estate idea over again. They dickered and played innocent with one another, neither wanting to seem too eager. Ellis talked up his hill and Thomas disparaged it pleasantly and, after an hour or so of such amenities, they agreed on a price, shook hands on it, and arranged to have a lawyer draw up the papers to make it all legal and binding.

So Thomas Preval acquired his land, two acres on the brow of the northeast hill, and a right-of-way through Ellis' land so he could go and come without trespassing. He spent the next days talking to the local carpenters and the village stonemason and to anyone he knew who had knowledge of building. By then, although it was already too late, they tried to dissuade him, arguing that even if he were foolish enough to live out of the protection of the valley, the northeast hill was by far the most inhospitable place he could have chosen: it was exposed to the fullest fury of the elements—lashed by rain, pounded by the winds, scorched by the sun. No house, they said, could really be comfortable or last long under such an assault from the weather. And, also, they reminded him, his hill was inaccessible and lonely and it could not be farmed.

"No matter," Thomas answered in gentle determination, "I just like it better up there."

A week later he set about building himself a home. He hammered four stakes in the ground to mark the corners and paced it off several times and added a few feet each way for good measure. Then he collected stone from all over the hillside, carried some, rolled others to his building site. When he had assembled several large mounds and graded them by size, he began the foundation, working carefully to keep it plumb and square and level. With a hand sledge and a cold chisel he shaped his stones so they sat together solidly, without danger of shifting. The soil was clayey along the spring and Thomas used the clay to chink his stonework. He made the walls three feet thick because up there on the hill it got frozen-cold in the high winds of winter and he had to do the job right if he wanted to get any comfort out of that house. He worked without haste all summer and into early autumn. The walls of his stone house rose steadily and straight and the openings for windows and door were square. The fireplace, taking up most of the north wall, turned out to be Thomas' special pride, for it was faced with hundreds of fist-sized stones, all close in color and all nearly round.

When the leaves had burned themselves out in their autumnal fires and began falling, Thomas' stonework was nearly done. He bought four windows at a mill in the valley and carried them up on his back and set them in place. But he'd outguessed himself on the door. It was, he found, too heavy and too large to be carried up in one piece along the narrow footpath he'd hacked out of the scrub. Although it was a bitter decision, Thomas finally decided that the only way to get that door up was to cut it in half and then, up above, splice it back together again. So he cut the door along its length and carried the first half up. Even that way he had difficulty. He fell repeatedly while struggling up the rocky path and once, while taking a short cut through the trees, a low branch sneaked between his shoulder and his load, tipped the half-door up once and caused it to slam down on the top of his head so hard he thought he'd been killed.

But he persisted, once his head cleared, and got the first door half up to the house, taking wry comfort in the fact that none of his skeptical friends had been witness to his misadventure. The next evening he took the second piece up, without mishap this time, since he stayed on the path.

Now it was bitter cold up on the hilltop—much colder than the valley, he had to admit, but more beautiful, too—and Thomas was afire to get the house enclosed before deep winter came. The work he had completed up to then had given him skinned and calloused hands; it had hardened his muscles; it had left him, too, with aches that ate deep into his body. But the work had given him, as well, a sense of elation that increased steadily as the house took shape. He couldn't bear the thought of leaving it unfinished through the callous winter, so he talked to his employer, Simon Sheets, and requested time off. Sheets was indignant at losing Thomas' services at a busy time of the year, but Sheets felt he had to oblige Thomas too, because Thomas was too good a mechanic to be easily replaced. So, although grudging about it, he gave Thomas Preval the time he wanted, three weeks without pay.

With axe and saw and adze, and with bark peelers and planes, Thomas Preval worked on his roof. There was sound, fallen timber on the hillside and he cut it to length and dragged it to the house. There he adzed it square and notched it and, using a system of poles for braces and wedges, raised his beams to the tops of the walls, lined them up, got the low ridge pole in position, and constructed his rafters. His eagerness gave him added strength, and he manhandled those heavy beams without appreciation of their true weight (in ensuing years he was to look back on this task with incredulity). His notches, carefully calculated, were in correct position. The rafters sat so true and so solid that the wooden pegs he inserted for strength at the joints were almost unnecessary.

By the time the first snow fell in mid-November, Thomas' roof was on and tightly chinked. His hand-sawn sheathing—planks ranging in width from six to eighteen inches—was pegged tight to the rafters, covered with thick sod, and weighted with stones. The windows were installed and the door, pieced back together, hung rigidly on three large hinges. It sat tight against its stops, cutting out all but a thin slice of the weather that was noticeable only if he stood directly in front of the jamb.

While the snow fell, Thomas hauled firewood into the house, all the discard timber, the trimmed branches, the shavings and bark, and stacked it neatly alongside the fireplace. Then he built his first fire in his new home. The chimney drew well and he fed the fire lavishly, adding to it until it was ready to receive the heaviest logs.

The stone house sweated as it warmed. Then the sweat dried and the windows steamed up. Thomas peeled off the three layers of clothing he'd worn over his regular shirt and trousers for the last weeks and, feeling marvelously unencumbered and gloriously pleased with himself, sat on a small upended log and enjoyed his fire and the security of his house against the storm. And, down in the valley, a few people happened to look up as they kicked through the snow and saw the thick smoke coming off the brow of the northeast hill.

"Thomas is in," one man said to his friend as they trudged to their homes.

"Aye. And I still think it's a fool place to build," the other answered. "Next thing we know he'll be seeking a wife to keep his mind off the cold. Well, no valley girl will have any of it."

As it turned out, Thomas was unhurried about seeking a wife. He moved his few belongings into his house and each week, as he received his salary, he used part of it to buy a piece of furniture. He began with a bed. He had a light folding cot in mind when he went to a furniture store, but a shrewd salesman, after chatting with him and learning a bit about his house, persuaded him that he deserved better, at least a comfortable single bed. After Thomas got used to and accepted that notion and began inspecting single beds, the salesman inquired, with seeming guilelessness, of Thomas' marital status.

Upon learning it, he renewed his selling assault, ending up by convincing Thomas Preval that it would be foresighted, and economical too, if he bought a double bed. So, somewhat to his surprise, Thomas bought a double bed and instructed that it be delivered to the base of his hill. There he took the frame apart and carried it uphill. Then he returned for the spring and found it a difficult portage because of its generous dimensions. The mattress was the most infuriating load, however, because even rolled up tightly and tied firmly it was a monstrously awkward burden. Also, the deep snow made his footing skittish on the trail. He tripped and skidded and slipped and fell during his upward climb and he arrived at the house, finally, black in the face from exertion and unrestrained cursing. But after he reassembled the bed and stretched his body loosely across its marvelous softness, he forgot the difficulties of getting things to his remote home and he sang cheerful songs at the top of his lungs to express his contentment.

That winter was a good time for Thomas. There was much snow and great winds, as the villagers had predicted, but his house was snug and, each week as he added more furnishings—a table, two chairs, a small mirror, a bed stand—it became increasingly pleasing to him. He had snowshoes, and his trail through the snow was packed hard from his two daily trips. Occasionally, on a weekend, some of the more adventurous valley boys would follow his trail, curious to see how he was surviving up there all alone; they'd stay for a cup of tea and then continue on into the woods, to hunt small game or just to prowl for a while.

Winter ended with a warm four-day rain. The snow took on a grayish cast and its smooth surface compressed, rippled, and sank low and melted. The spring near the house gushed strongly out of its rocky fount and the water mumbled agreeably down to the valley. A fret of rivulets, fed by melting snow from higher up among the trees, made the entire face of the hill a springy, liquid carpet. The weary winter grass stood straighter and slowly turned green. The lightning storms came and Thomas watched, in awe and excitement, the vibrant restless flashes along the ridges of the surrounding, higher hills. Then the trees swelled with buds. The jays and cardinals, which had stayed the winter through, were joined by sparrows and wrens, robins and finches.

Thomas Preval, walking his hilltop, rejoiced at first. Then, curiously, as the richness of spring became overpowering, he fell into a state of quiet discontent. His house was finished for the most part. Although he had his job at the garage, he felt unoccupied. The great effort was done. He had no ideas.

His melancholy lasted deep into spring. Half-heartedly he began picking stones out of the ground back of the house, thinking it might be a good spot to start a vegetable garden. But the ground was too rocky and, after a few days, he gave it up. He split a log and shaved it flat and hauled it to the side of his house overlooking Forton. It made a comfortable bench and Thomas Preval spent much time sitting on it, staring unseeingly across the valley.

One warm Sunday afternoon, towards the end of May, Thomas saw from his bench a flick of blue moving through the saplings that fronted the woods. He straightened curiously, squinted to see better, and finally determined that a woman was walking there. She was too far away for Thomas to know who she was. He decided to stroll across to her and take a look.

Whoever she was, she was either shy or unaware of Thomas and his house, for she went deeper into the woods. For a while he lost sight of her, but he followed her by sound. Presently, tiring, Thomas gave her a halloo. She stopped and called back in a surprised voice and, in a few moments, he reached her. She was young, he saw, and unafraid. She regarded him squarely with steady brown eyes under strong, dark eyebrows. Her hair was deep brown and reached below her shoulders. Her face was almost plain, with a wide brow, an emphatic nose, and a squarish chin. But she was serene of countenance and therefore attractive to look upon.

"How do," Thomas said pleasantly.

She inclined her head slightly, acknowledging nothing.

"My name is Thomas Preval," he told her. "I live near by. I thought to say hello when I saw you moving about."

She smiled gravely. "You're kind," she answered. "Thomas Preval. I've heard of you and your house, but was uncertain of where on the hill you'd built. Now that I've finally got up here—I came to gather strawberries—I can see why you chose this spot. My name is Ruth Flinn."

Thomas nodded, liking her directness. "I've not seen you before," he said.

"Not likely. My parents and I came to Forton only this winter. We're new."

They chatted a bit more and Thomas asked her if she'd like to see his house, asked her cautiously, for he did not know how she might interpret such an invitation and he did not want her to take his words amiss. She accepted without uneasiness and they strolled back to the house, stopping now and then to add a few wild berries to her tin collecting can. When they reached Thomas' clearing, they walked around the house twice and then, although Ruth Flinn had disappointed him somewhat by offering no comment, she asked if she might see the inside, too. He took her in and showed her about and watched her face while she inspected.

She was the first woman to enter his house and her presence gave him for the first time a sense of uncertainty about what he'd done. He'd gratified himself, to be sure, but looking about, trying to see the small stone house through the eyes of a woman, Thomas Preval, although buoyed up by the mere presence of Ruth Flinn, began to feel disparaging of what he'd built, thinking it cramped and rough and altogether unpleasing.

He cleared his throat abruptly and said, a shade harshly, "Well, that's all there's to it," and led her outdoors again. His breathing came easier out in the sunlight. He invited her to rest on the log bench.

"It's a fine, fine home," she declared then. "Your labor was not wasted, in spite of what they say down below. I thank you for letting me see it."

Elated, Thomas answered, "No, it's a small box, fit only for a single man who needs little. No sensible woman could ever see herself living up here, so far away from anything."

Ruth Flinn laughed then in great amusement, throwing back her head and laughing heartily until Thomas was infected by it and joined in.

So Thomas met Ruth Flinn. He met her in May and courted her with increasing fervor through June, July, and August, and asked her to marry him early in September. She accepted him the first time he asked and they were married later that month, when the foliage was vibrantly golden and russet and rose and glaring green, as if to celebrate their honeymoon procession up the steep northeast hill to their isolated home.

They were happy. They enjoyed each other and the wild beauty of their hilltop and they lived in rich simplicity. Soon—and that was part of it and not surprising—it was noticed on one of Ruth Preval's trips to the village that there would be a child. Her parents were uneasy, thinking of her all alone on the hill, and they asked her and Thomas to stay with them until her time, but Ruth smiled away their anxieties.

Winter came, overstayed, and finally melted without Ruth or Thomas having any occasion for worry. By spring Ruth was large but carrying her baby easily and gracefully. In April, the time of the electric storms, she stayed indoors, keeping the fire up against the pervasive chill, sewing on garments for the baby soon to come, in eight weeks, more or less.

One morning, after a restless sleep, Thomas rolled awake at the usual time with a sense of foreboding. Ruth was sleeping peacefully at his side. Scowling, he went to the window and peered out, trying to understand, in his sleep-slow condition, why there was still a thick night sky above when dawn should have come. He stepped out the door to investigate this phenomenon. The air felt moist and dense and there was not a single sound, no wind, no bird call, no rustle of small animals in the meadow. Uncommonly thick and black storm clouds held back the day, he saw, and they were unlike any he had ever seen before. Thomas was not superstitious, but the strangeness of this dawn frightened him. He went inside and roused Ruth and told her he wanted her to come down to the town with him, at least until the storm had passed.

She kissed him and refused, kissed him and soothed his fears away, assured him that she would be all right and that no storm, however fierce, could disturb her in their fine, strong house. Thomas finally gave in, chided himself for his alarm and, after breakfasting, went down to the garage.

The storm broke soon after he began work. The unnatural darkness was split by a blinding instant of whiteness and, a moment later, the villagers, no matter where they happened to be, were stunned by an ear-hurting thunderbolt. Thomas ran outside the garage and looked up towards his hill. The sky was blackest up there and, as he watched, he saw several mighty gashes of lightning probing the hillcrest. Then a blast of wind roared through the valley,

bending the trees low, straining houses on their foundations. Walls of thick, stinging raindrops followed, obscuring sight and all sound except the booming, vibrating thunder.

A few men standing in the garage saw Thomas Preval drop to his knees. They thought the force of the storm had made him lose his footing, but Simon Sheets said no, it wasn't that; Thomas was praying. He was right. Even as the villagers grasped the idea of Thomas praying in the midst of a violent storm, Thomas lunged to his feet and began running towards his hill.

He ran desperately, fighting the furious wind and the blinding rain and, when he began the ascent, he found his path a muddy waterway. He slipped and floundered, made progress by grabbing branches of trees and shrubs bordering the path. Exhaustion made his blood pound violently and he sweated freely in the drenching rain. Effort dimmed his perceptions and he misjudged distances and missed steps or slammed into trees and rocks. But he got up to his clearing and found that the hillside was bathed in an eery phosphorescent glow, as if the whole land had become incandescent in protest against the unnatural, mid-morning darkness.

With a despairing moan he lurched towards the house, got up close and saw, in the terrifying light of another bolt, that his house had been hit by lightning: most of the roof had been destroyed, and the tops of the walls and part of one corner, too, had crashed down when the great timbers had fallen. He tugged the door open and found his way blocked by roof beams and stone.

"Ruth!" he screamed. Hearing no answer, he wrenched at the debris in an effort to cross the room to the bed. Finally he got to it and found that the timbers had not fallen completely, that there was a small space between them and the floor. He forced the heavy beams apart and peered into the cul de sac, saw Ruth there, lying half on the bed, half on the floor, motionless as death. Thomas forced the beams wider apart and dropped down, knelt next to his wife, placed one of his bruised, bleeding hands on her back and thanked God to find her still breathing.

He got her out, lifting and pulling her across the clutter of his house and out of doors, out into the insane violence of the storm. He hoisted Ruth up, cradled her in his arms and staggered away, sobbing as he went.

Somehow, Thomas got down to Forton safely, carried his wife back to the garage, where they put her in a car and drove her to the hospital twenty-eight miles away, with Thomas sitting beside her, grim and unspeaking and with a terrible fear showing in his eyes.

Ruth lived, although she lost the child. Thomas was thankful. Ruth was battered and her left wrist was broken, but she survived, sorrowing for the child. Late that afternoon, when the storm had subsided to a monotonous downpour, Thomas returned to the garage at Forton. Simon Sheets was relieved to hear that Ruth would be all right, but then he became uncommunicative. He left Thomas alone in the garage, saying he had an errand. He seemed embarrassed about Thomas' misfortune.

After a while, Thomas noted that the rain had ended. He went outside and looked uphill towards his house. Most of the walls remained, but one beam, knocked endwise, stuck idiotically out of the center of the house, like a finger of derision.

When Sheets returned, he put a comforting hand on Thomas' shoulder. He was a valley man and he undoubtedly felt that there was a lesson of sorts in Thomas' misfortune, but he was too kind to comment.

"If you want to go on up, why go on," he said.

Thomas looked bleakly at Sheets. "I'd best get back to the hospital," he replied.

Ruth was permitted to leave the hospital after four days. In that time Thomas Preval searched through Forton, seeking a place to live. The only place available, ironically, was the house he had grown up in, now much shabbier and greatly in need of repair. He rented it and cleaned it up a bit and borrowed some furniture against the day he could return to his other house and retrieve what the storm had spared. On the day he took Ruth home from the hospital, during the automobile drive back to Forton, he told her how the storm had robbed them twice, not only of their child, but of their home, too. She hadn't known about the house. She took the news silently, grieving with him, but squeezing his hand reassuringly, too, to let him know that for all their unhappiness she was still glad to be alive and able to continue living with him.

So they moved into the house that Thomas had lived in as a boy, and after a few days they made it comfortable, made it a home of sorts. Two weeks after the storm, when Ruth was feeling stronger, they climbed the northeast hill.

Thomas growled when he saw the ruin of their house and then turned away, as if the sight hurt his eyes.

"What shall we do, Thomas?" Ruth asked.

"Do? We'll salvage what we can—it'll be precious little."

"Then we'll not rebuild it?"

"No. What's the use? The best workmanship in the world would be wasted up here: the villagers were right. Besides, I'll not risk losing you another time."

During the next days, Thomas retrieved some of their things, digging through the mess of the wrecked house, casting wood and stone aside in angry carelessness. He had no plans for the place. "It'll be good for bird's nests and rabbit holes," he said shortly to Ruth. "Might be the young ones from the village will come up here and play on the rocks. It's good enough for that. Naught else. Let the shell be a monument of sorts to a stubborn valley man who didn't have enough sense to stay where he belonged."

Ruth objected, but he made it plain he could not bear any further discussion of the house. He made several trips, carrying their clothes and bed and table and chairs down to Forton. They were gloomy, heavy-footed trips. His old smile did not cross his face once during that time.

"Ah, now," Simon Sheets protested one day, "you're taking it overly hard."

Thomas growled for answer and continued at his work.

So it was a bitter summer and autumn for Thomas Preval and not even Ruth could cheer him out of it. He did his work at the garage and he did his few chores around his rented home and had no spirit left for anything else. He wouldn't join Ruth on her walks through the meadows and woods outside the village, nor could he sustain a chat with her when she stayed to keep him company. She did not lose patience with his brooding. Ruth had her own great sense of loss, too, but in wifely forbearance she kept her thoughts to

herself. There were other things for her to think about; there would be time later to discuss them. Meanwhile, she cared for Thomas as much as he permitted, and she hoped.

By late fall she was certain and, one evening while she sat outdoors with Thomas, watching the day diminish, she told him that once again they might expect a child. She had gauged her man correctly. The information exhilarated him. For the first time in months he talked gladly and a quickness returned to his movements.

They were able to be carefree once more, and the next months went swiftly. The winter ended and once more Ruth was big, going about her work with grace and deliberation.

One evening, when her time was not far off, she watched Thomas through a long silence, occasionally studying the mysterious images in their fire. It was almost the time of electric storms again and, though Ruth had a strong inner calm, she sensed her husband's uneasiness, his anxious waiting to see if the lightning would be confined to the highest peaks, or whether it would concentrate again on the northeast hill.

"It shall be a boy," she said positively.

He put a restraining hand on her knee.

"May we name him Martin, after your father?" she persisted.

"We'll see," Thomas answered gruffly. "Now's too soon to talk of it."

"He'll look like you, Thomas," she continued evenly. "He'll have your hair and your eyes. . . ."

"Stop," he said fearfully. "You're tempting fate—"

"Thomas, Thomas," she cried, "we don't tempt fate by mere living."

"A year ago," he reminded her brutally, "we made plans, too."

"Aye. And the year before that. And the year before that, too."

"All right. But look what happened to those plans when the lightning hit."

"It was chance. It may never happen again. You said yourself you'd watched that hill all your life and that you'd never seen lightning strike it: you said the higher hills beyond kept lightning off. So, for once, the lightning fooled you and. . . ."

Angrily, Thomas interrupted: "What do you want of me?"

"Have faith," she answered peacefully. "Faith to live in your own way and to take the risks of life in stride."

When he arose the next morning, Thomas recalled her words and they left him with a feeling of disquiet. He looked at her deeply while they breakfasted and he caught a bit of her serenity. When he reached the garage a while later, he lingered outside to look piercingly up at the northeast hill, to study its familiar contours of tree and meadow and the shell of his house. And all that morning, while he worked on automobiles, he kept thinking of the house he had built. By noon he was unable to sit still so he went out for an aimless stroll. Before he was aware of his action, he found himself on the ancient trail, starting upwards for the first time in nearly a year. After a moment of indecision, he continued, moving rapidly past familiar trees, skirting well-remembered boulders. He came out below his clearing and walked slowly to the house, a sad, neglected pile overgrown with briars and honeysuckle. And, as he had predicted, it had become a refuge for small animals. While he approached, a dismayed rabbit zigzagged in front of him before taking a quick, straight course towards the high weeds alongside the house.

Thomas laughed aloud, admiring the rabbit, admiring the scene with the freshness of a traveler coming home. He went to the house and touched one of the walls, recalling his satisfying toil. He leaned his shoulder against it and pushed and found it firm.

The spliced door was ajar. Thomas touched it and it moved silently on its hinges. He went in, his steps springy on the thick layer of honeysuckle that had blanketed much of the fallen stone and weather-greyed beams and rafters. Thomas moved in, climbed over the rubble, and squinted along the walls to see how they stood, to see if what remained was still in line. His inspection was lengthy and, while he moved about the house, calculating the effort it had cost him so long ago, a spring storm raced over the horizon and unloosed itself without warning. Thomas straightened at the first patter of rain and, seeing the storm about him, felt an instinctive fear. Thunder rumbled far away and Thomas flinched. Then a strong wind scudded across the hilltop, bearing a heavy measure of rain. Thomas looked about for escape. Another grumble of thunder stayed his flight. Standing there, looking out on the meadow, he saw a

rabbit. Then another. Both raced towards the house and disappeared in shelter along its base.

Thomas grinned at the ludicrous haste of the rabbits. Another snap of thunder echoed across the hill. He decided to take his shelter with the rabbits and he squatted in a corner out of the wind to wait out the storm.

It clattered away as quickly as it had come. Thomas stood up and looked out, watching the black clouds receding to the south; seeing occasional lightning bolts snake down towards the hilltops in a random way. The sun reappeared and glinted on the wet meadow, creating a spectacle fully as brilliant as any flash of lightning, too bright for the eye to encompass. Thomas gasped at the awesome beauty of the sun-claimed meadow and heard a last cannonade of thunder rolling far away as the storm swept on its course.

And, thinking once more on Ruth's words of the previous night, Thomas regained the spirit he had lost. He recalled the feeling that had made him build here in the first place: an admiration for the temperament of nature, a wish to be close at hand and part of it when nature performed. To satisfy such desires involved certain risks and hardships, and Thomas, when he started to build, had been willing to meet his obligations. He saw now that he would not be less of a man if he played it safe and stayed down in the valley, but at the same time he would not have precisely the same pleasure out of living if he did so.

So he kicked away the dripping ground vine, the weeds, the matted vegetation, and picked up a stone. He studied it, saw some chisel marks on it, remembered the stone and the day he had originally shaped it for a spot on the wall. He weighed it in both his hands, then turned and smoothed a spot on the top of the wall and replaced the stone, wedged it.

He was satisfied. The job could be done again. There was a stirring of excitement in him. He found another rock and found a place for that one, too, on the walltop. He wanted to do more, desiring to rip away the ground growth, clear the tangle of rock and wood and sort it anew. But he had to go back to Forton, had to return to his work and, afterwards, upon returning home, tell Ruth of his desire to rebuild.

He went down with a joyous spring in his walk. The day moved slowly for him but finally it was over. He strode rapidly to his rented house. Before he was barely inside he told Ruth of what he had decided to do. She embraced him when he was finished with his telling, embraced him there in the doorway, for anyone passing by to see.

And the next night, soon after midnight, Ruth roused Thomas to tell him that her time, too, had come. Thomas drove her to the hospital and, several hours later, the child was born. They named him Martin.

A Voice in Cellophane

By SAMUEL HAZO

This tent admits your face through such a thin
transparency that nothing but the breath
you valve into my lungs seems false to me.

With hypodermics primed to bring me sleep
or numb me quickly when the pain begins,
you tend a fossil kept alive as long
as glucose drips through these umbilicals
that tap inverted bottles to my veins
while oxygen releases from a green
and cold torpedo metered near my bed . . .

I dream of swamps where roots in landfall spike
the ground like talons, and the shores dissolve

like ashes in the gnarled clutch of hawks.
Multiple thunderbolts strike and stitch the sky
while clouds descend like charging cavalry
until I lunge for something like the sun
on scythed savannahs under even winds,
for stars at twelve o'clock, for lakerock mossed
and dark below the waves—for breath or light
to lure me from this waste that keeps me stunned
and helpless as a bottled fly or stymied
like a moth against a screen before I wake
and find you standing with a sedative
to send me back into the nightmare-night.

My hands flounder like mangled, dying birds
beneath your starched and antiseptic sleeves
that dart as quick as levers in the dark.

If I could for a moment see your eyes
and know you understand the siege of dreams,
the snaking rush of roots around a stone,
the stroke of lightning snapping like a lash
above the stallion-storm, the flight in dust
before the fall and panic underhoof,
I think I would be less afraid to feel
you wipe this cotton cool with alcohol
across the arm I try and try to raise
to ask you with a touch if you can hear
above these bedlams of the wind, my voice.

SAMUEL HAZO teaches in the graduate and undergraduate schools of Duquesne University. A selection of his poetry, which has appeared widely, was recently published in a volume entitled *Discovery and Other Poems* (Sheed and Ward), and he is presently preparing a critical study of the poems of Hart Crane for Barnes and Noble's "American Authors and Critics" series.

■ BOOKS

Bolshevism and the Historian: The Russian Party from Lenin to Khrushchev

By ROBERT D. WARTH

When the followers of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov—Lenin—wrested power from the feeble grasp of the Russian Provisional Government in 1917, the Western world duly noted the event with appropriate sentiments of incredulous outrage. That this "handful of madmen and fanatics," these "hare-brained visionaries" and "architects of ruin" (as the press organs of the democracies so picturesquely described them) would survive and even flourish in the arid political soil of Russia—the backwater of Western civilization—seemed remote indeed, especially after civil war and foreign intervention plunged the country into fresh chaos. The Bolsheviks, as the so-called majority faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party came to be known in 1903, not only confounded the prophets of doom; their dogmatic but apocalyptic brand of Marxism has found a ready response in quarters which Lenin himself deemed the least promising, namely, the "semi-feudal," pre-industrial society of Asia.

Communism as an international phenomenon has not yet found its historian, at least in any meaningful sense. (The pioneering effort of Franz Borkenau is dated but rich in insights on the 1920's and early 1930's.) Until the publication of the two works here under review,[1] which will be examined in due course, the same could be said rather more

[1] *The Communist Party in the Soviet Union*. By Leonard Schapiro. Random House, 1960. $7.50.
A Concise History of the Community Party in the Soviet Union. By John S. Reshetar, Jr. Praeger Paperbacks, 1960. $1.75.

ROBERT D. WARTH, now an editor for a New York publisher, has long been a student of Soviet history. He is the author of *The Allies and the Russian Revolution* and many articles and reviews, including "Stalin's Ghost and the Khrushchev Thaw: Soviet Historians in the Crucible" in our Winter '60-'61 issue.

emphatically of Communism's formal roots in the Russian Party. A generation of Soviet scholars and publicists has, of course, labored in the intellectual salt mines of *Istpart*—Party history. As the authoritarian pattern of Soviet society became increasingly rigid, the hazards of writing contemporary history, particularly about the Party itself, became almost prohibitive. Fashions in orthodoxy fluctuated too swiftly. The prudent historian—there tended to be no other variety after the early thirties—sought politically harmless subjects buried in the distant past. *Istpart* was left to the hacks and eunuchs of the historical profession.

Several Old Bolsheviks ventured into the field of Party history before the intellectual blight of Stalinism set in: Gregory Zinoviev, Emilian Yaroslavsky, and Andrei Bubnov. Zinoviev's brief work (1923) was intended for a popular audience and discreetly concludes with the fall of the monarchy. He thereby avoided the prickly area of Bolshevik strategy in 1917 (he had opposed the October Revolution as adventurous) and the early years of the Soviet regime. Yaroslavsky's volume (1930) was much more ambitious and did not shirk the post 1917 period. But in scope and originality it was superseded by Bubnov's impressive treatise of some six hundred pages (1931), easily the most authoritative history of the Party from a Soviet viewpoint. Its value beyond the Bolshevik seizure of power, however, is slight. Lacking the authentic flavor of actual participation in the revolutionary struggle, but in its day the most comprehensive "official" work, was Nikolai Popov's "outline history" (1928). It was revised numerous times as the standard textbook for Party members and was eventually shelved in 1935 in favor of a collaborative volume edited by Wilhelm Knorin.

To an outsider, these ventures into the occult science of *Istpart* appear to be the ultimate in doctrinal purity. As in medieval morality plays, the triumph of Good over Evil is foreordained. Legal Marxists, Economists, Revisionists, Liquidators, Recallists, "God-builders," Mensheviks, "social patriots," Trotskyites—not to mention assorted bourgeois reactionaries—all are vanquished as the Marxian dialetic thrusts the Party onward and upward toward the Communist utopia. Still, none of these works survived the rigors of "creeping Stalinism." The "genius leader of all mankind," in *Pravda's* unctuous phrase, had been ignored in 1923 (Zinoviev), then treated with cautious respect as he rose to power (Yaroslavsky and Bubnov), and finally accorded the undisguised admiration befitting the supreme ruler (Popov and Knorin). Yet even the Knorin volume, though it verges upon intellectual dishonesty, avoids the kind of historical myth-mongering soon to be inflicted upon the Soviet intelligentsia. The bibliography forthrightly includes John Reed's *Ten Days*

that Shook the World, that classic evocation of the Bolshevik Revolution which Stalin blacklisted because, among other heresies, his name was missing from the text.

To remold the past to fit the ideological straitjacket of the late thirties, the notorious *Short Course* (1938) on the Party was constructed in the dictator's historical workshops. Its dreary and pedantic style suggests his close personal supervision, if not partial authorship. As a chronicle of historical events it approaches an Orwellian nightmare. For Party members too prominent to be flung into the memory hole, retroactive treason was the standard gambit: "[In 1918] Bukharin, Trotsky, and their fellow-conspirators had determined to wreck the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, arrest V. I. Lenin, J. V. Stalin and Y. M. Sverdlov, assassinate them, and form a new government consisting of Bukharinities, Trotskyites and 'Left' Socialist-Revolutionaries." As the epitome of Stalinism, the *Short Course* became the bible of Party workers and sold some fifty million copies. After Stalin's death in 1953 it became increasingly embarrassing to the new leadership. But a Khrushchev exegesis was not forthcoming until the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 when a new version of Party history was authorized under the supervision of a ten-member editorial board. The work made its appearance in 1959 after a two-year delay. Like its predecessors, it is more significant as a commentary on the political climate of the Soviet Union than serious history. Nevertheless, compared to the *Short Course,* there are a number of items to its credit: the prose, while far from elegant, is less soporific; the factual information is up to date, more abundant, and, within its own frame of reference, reasonably accurate; the interpretation represents sophistication of a sort, and to the uninformed it is even convincing. Most significant of all, the "personality cult of J. V. Stalin" is condemned without equivocation. Unfortunately, the nature of the cult is never explained nor its objectionable features spelled out. It is conceded that Stalin made "serious mistakes . . . in the last years of his life," but again an opaque curtain of generalities conceals the mistakes as well as the character and personality of the man who made them. Such a central episode as the Moscow trials is, typically, passed over except by inference.

On the record, it would seem that the possibility of an acceptable Party history of Soviet provenance is highly unlikely. A vast mellowing of the Communist monolith, hardly conceivable during the present decade, would certainly be a prerequisite. "Bourgeois" scholars have, on the other hand, few of the disabilities under which their Soviet brethren labor. Valuable contributions have been made in the field of recent Russian history and Soviet affairs, though much of it, notably that produced in

the United States, has been justly criticized for its Cold War overtones. Nearly all of this growing body of literature impinges upon the Communist Party, for government and Party are linked in a manner unknown in any Western country. But a full scale history is an awesomely difficult project; and until the appearance of the Schapiro and Reshetar volumes, the numerous Kremlinologists of the Atlantic community shied away from a frontal assault in favor of sorties on the flank. Some have felt that the primary sources are so limited (i.e., inaccessible) that any attempt was destined to fail. Efforts to dissect Party affairs—indeed, any aspect of Soviet politics—in the manner of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., on the Roosevelt era is obviously out of the question.

Author of the well received *Ukranian Revolution, 1917-1921* (1952), Professor Reshetar of the University of Washington has written a careful and competent work which in less imposing company might be adjudged an outstanding achievement. The chief merit of his book is brevity combined with first-rate scholarship. For those short on motivation, endurance, or funds, the essential information is furnished in eight chapters averaging some thirty-five pages each—less than a third the length of Schapiro's monumental opus. If his craftsmanship does not always match his erudition, the reader need not anticipate the kind of academic pidgin English which infests much of the literature on the Soviet Union.

Schapiro is the author of *The Origins of the Communist Autocracy* (1955) and is presently affiliated with the University of London. His is a virtuoso performance, not at all suitable for novices anxious to solve the fabled "enigma" of Soviet Communism. At the same time, the approach is neither esoteric nor technical and the diction ranges from serviceable to distinguished. In scope and in quality, fewer than a dozen works on modern Russia are comparable. Of recent vintage, only E. H. Carr's multivolumed *tour de force* on the first decade of Soviet rule and Isaac Deutscher's superb biographies of Trotsky and Stalin are of equivalent stature. To generalize, perhaps too recklessly, Carr and Deutscher are representative of a broad strata of European intellectuals whose view of what used to be called the "Soviet experiment" is relatively benign. Schapiro—as does Reshetar—mirrors the astringent mood of American liberalism in its conviction that the totalitarian pattern of Stalinism (or quasi-Stalinism) is the permanent mold of Communist society. Most Soviet specialists in the United States would undoubtedly concur, as would the best known historians of the Party not previously mentioned: Bertram D. Wolfe, whose *Three Who Made a Revolution* (1948) pioneered the biographical dimension of Bolshevism, and Robert V. Daniels, who offers a fresh look at the intra-Party struggles of the twenties in his *Conscience of the Revolution* (1960).

Given Schapiro's premises, his introductory remark that he has sought to "avoid making value judgments [about human motives], and to leave the facts to speak for themselves," sounds inordinately naive. Surely the Rankean dream of writing history "as it actually happened" no longer inspires latter-day disciples. Happily, his avowal is not to be taken literally. The dry bones of the narrative are interlarded with meaty analytical passages in which value judgments abound; and the end product, if not entirely convincing, is as cogent and perceptive an interpretation as one is likely to get in our generation. The "facts" are certainly there—almost too many if statistical data may be regarded as distinctly secondary to the function of the historian. Still, there is a place for such nuggets of pure research as the number of assignments carried out by *Uchraspred* (the Records and Assignment Department of the Party Central Committee) as compared with the Orgburo (Organizational Bureau of the C.C.) between April and November of 1919. The correct figures, 2,182 for the former and 544 for the latter, might be more appropriately stated, however, in a specialized article in the proper academic journal.

The spade work in digging through the layers of historical myth and obscurantist dogma about the origin and development of Bolshevism has now been largely accomplished. True, there are certain major areas which need further investigation. The output of Leniniana rivals the Lincoln and Napoleon cults, yet a biography of real distinction, either Soviet or non-Soviet, has not appeared. Even a mediocre study of George Plekhanov, the "father of Russian Marxism" and the key figure in any comparison of Bolshevism with Western socialism, remains to be written. It would be helpful too, if the gap were to be filled between 1881, where Franco Venturi's magnificent study of the Populist movement, *Roots of Revolution* (1960), halts quite abruptly, and 1898, the traditional founding date of the Social Democratic Party. And to move from the pragmatic to the speculative, there is always the fascinating prospect of a future Schapiro providing us with the "inside story" of the Stalinist era. The glacial ice of the Party's inner history has melted only slightly under the Khrushchev thaw.

To what extent is Bolshevism a purely Russian phenomenon, to what extent a radical version of the Marxian heresy spawned by industrial capitalism and Western democracy? Was it authoritarian to begin with, or did its repressive features develop when for the first time avowed Marxists were confronted with the difficulty of building a socialist society under primitive conditions? These are hard questions, and no explicit answers are provided. Certain tentative conclusions can nonetheless be inferred. To Schapiro, and to some extent for Reshetar, Menshevism is the true legatee of Russian Social Democracy. Bolshevism is basically

Leninism writ large, just as Communism (essentially Bolshevism in power) bears a similar relationship to Stalinism. The evidence is somewhat overstrained to demonstrate that Stalin's excesses were prepared by Lenin's anti-democratic philosophy. The argument approaches the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy of Logic I, but it is well to be reminded that the legend of a Leninist golden age fostered by Trotsky and Khrushchev (and probably Soviet leaders yet to come) has little basis in reality. To be entirely consistent, Schapiro ought to uphold the proposition that Bolshevism was better adapted to its Russian environment (cf., Berdyaev) than the alien "Western" doctrine of Menshevism. History, after all, rendered its own harsh verdict in the October Revolution. But at this he balks and never really grapples with the problem of how and why the Bolsheviks came to power or the manner in which they have held it for well over forty years. Refinements of Lord Acton's celebrated maxim about power and corruption must succumb to the law of diminishing intellectual returns.

An oversimplified view of the dynamics of power and of the Party's role in Soviet society is shared by both authors, although Reshetar's is the more mechanical since it is largely descriptive. They emphasize the power struggle within the Politburo, the stultifying conformity of Stalinism, and the brutal exactions of the secret police. When more subtle aspects of political stability and social cohesion than terror, coercion, and propaganda are involved, the treatment is perfunctory or wholly lacking. The Party is doubtless the instrument of totalitarian rule; it has also wrought an industrial and technological revolution which has transformed the nature of Russian society and of Russia's place in world affairs.

With sufficient historical perspective, Bolshevism and its various offspring under the Communist label may come to be regarded as imperfect endeavors to arrive at the good society by "crash" methods. The search for international status in an age of potential plenty has led to the barbaric methods of capital accumulation practiced under Stalin and to the current variant in Maoist China. It has led in a different direction to the "national Communism" of Tito's Yugoslavia and Gomulka's Poland. Nor is it fanciful to suggest that other circumstances will produce still other deviations. Castro's Cuba is a case in point: Fidelismo simply does not fit the tortured semantics of Cold War politics.

The Communist image projected in much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America is one of dynamic achievement rather than political tyranny and intellectual sterility. Why? In his failure to explore the question thoroughly as it pertains to the Russian Party, Schapiro's excellent book has missed greatness.

Surface View of a Facade

The Fifty-Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood. By Ezra Goodman. Simon and Schuster, 1961. $5.95.

To read the way Mr. Ezra Goodman writes it, one would make a natural assumption that the motion picture industry is hardly worth the telling. At which point our author then spends four hundred-odd pages proving this thesis. For while the author makes a valiant attempt at a legitimate dissection, in most cases he seems to have forgotten to clean his instruments, and the result is more of a meat-plant vivisection than good reportorial surgery. In fairness to Mr. Goodman, however, it might be noted that just as Hollywood must be viewed from a country-length away, so as to better distinguish the forest from the palm trees and the sights from the sycophants, so too must the reviewer. And in this case, I happen to live in a geographical dead-center of an industry where the author drops his bombs. So the reader here must take a grain of salt while assessing this judgment and make allowances for the fact that Mr. Goodman's hatchet job gets close to this writer's home.

The Fifty-Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood purports to annotate in a reportorial and clinical manner the sickness, the cheapness, the facade that is Hollywood. I say it "purports" to do this, because Mr. Goodman's own objectivity is left on a ledge somewhere between page five and page four hundred and three. And while this rather lengthy diatribe against the people, the environs, and the industry could never be remotely described as unreadable, it is nonetheless apparent that Mr. Goodman uses petulance as a response to petulance and offers a back-biting reaction to back-biting. It is Mr. Goodman's contention that there have been roughly a half a dozen artistically honest and effective motion pictures made in a half century of grinding out celluloid opuses. He credits David Wark Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" and Vittorio De Sica's "Umberto D" as being uniquely and almost singularly worthy of critical attention. He refers to Andy and Virginia Stone (a current Hollywood husband and wife producing and writing team) as being the only original movie makers left in Hollywood. The several-odd thousand other films and film makers in between are shrugged off with a perfunctory editorial back-hand. But this does not take place before the author has hung up their various creators, producers, directors, and public relations men on nails

with some slapdash hyperbole and a collection of apocryphal sounding anecdotes about their libidinous excesses. And while it is a fact that the Hollywood luminaries who take a collective slap in the jaw from Mr. Goodman do not seem to be altogether sacrosanct or undeserving of some negative critical attention, Mr. Goodman's own excesses in his treatment of them seems always to stem from some personal slight suffered at their hands. He roasts alive such well-known figures as Walter Wanger, Stanley Kramer, and Arthur Mayer and does a fair job of hoisting them on their own petard. He then proceeds to vitiate some reasonably self-damning aspects of the individuals by accompanying each anecdote with yet another in which we are told how the same people tried to get him discharged from whatever was his current writing assignment. One gets the feeling throughout the book after reading a particularly relishing account of this director's scandalous extracurricular activities or that producer's idiotic cowardice or some fantastically shoddy press agent's practice, that the author is less concerned with an objective probe of some of the lesser known inanities of Hollywood, than with a counterattack against any and all who at some point in his career have done him wrong.

But petulant or not, and subjective or not, *The Fifty-Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood* contains much truth and some extremely colorful commentary. The first chapter of the book is devoted to an interview with a gin-soaked David Wark Griffith that takes place in a lower middle-class hotel room. The room happens to overlook a city which the old man helped build, but which now deigns to give him only momentary and niggardly remembrances in the form of some cheap, second-thought awards tossed out at the end of a few Oscar affairs, more as a balm to conscience than as a legitimate recognition of a man's worth and legitimate contribution. There is a chapter devoted to the trade papers which represent the bulk of reading of too many of Hollywood's citizenry and which exist on a daily claptrap of transom-peeping innuendoes and press agent feeds. He recounts in detail in this chapter a period a few years back when the Writers Guild of America representing the screenwriters laid down a Guild ruling that no writers would be permitted to advertise in the trades. By way of retaliation, the *Hollywood Reporter* in its reviews of motion pictures made it a practice never to mention the writer's name, and one would have to make an assumption that for a period of almost a year all screen plays coming out of Hollywood were done by an I.B.M. electronic computer. There is nothing in this story that is earth-shakingly commentative on an art form, but it does demonstrate vividly some of the small-boy petulances that govern a few of Hollywood's institutions.

Mr. Goodman hits paydirt and brackets his target beautifully when

he devotes another chapter to the ever present, almost omniscient awards so associable with Hollywood. It is a fact that in the vast array of plaques, statues and statuettes, scrolls and diplomas given out annually by Hollywood to itself, a strange and insecure narcissism shows itself, and with it there is ample evidence of almost psychotic insecurity. Hollywood is forever honoring itself and the grandoise citations accompanying these awards are far more lyrical than legitimate. At least eight that I know of and which Mr. Goodman mentions usually make reference to "monumental contributions to the art of motion pictures." At best the wording is euphemistic and at worst, inane.

Not the least of Mr. Goodman's journalistic contempt is reserved for Hollywood columnists. Both Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons, stalwart fixtures on the Hollywood scene, emerge as fatuous village idiots whose power and perogative is in an absolute inverse ratio to their talent. The author is at his best when he tilts his lance at these particular ladies. He quotes, for example, a Louella Parsons' column which, as her custom, takes the form of an open letter to this actor or actress. In this case, it is a reprint of Louella's open letter to Eva Marie Saint after tossing out a four letter, uniquely American word beginning with "s" at a Producer's Guild dinner. It would be difficult to parody this kind of thing when it stands out as a shining example of the most hilarious parody all by itself.

Mr. Goodman's needle is longest and sharpest when he talks about actors and actresses. We are shown some revealing instances when the shooting of a five million dollar motion picture can be halted because the female lead has walked off in a flounce because her dressing room is three feet further away from the set than the competitive actress second in the billing. There are a sufficient number of similar anecdotes to suggest that Hollywood's royalty has a preoccupation with caste and protocol at the expense of a less easily defined item called talent. There are at least twenty "stars" whom Mr. Goodman takes by the hand and walks from set to analyst's couch and on the way collects a few specimens on slides for some damaging examinations. Oddly enough, Mr. Goodman saves much of his praise for perhaps the least liked personalities of the business and limits his reasoning to a kind of "They're bastards—but they're honest bastards" conclusion. He reserves his grudging respect, for example, for one Harry Cohn, the late movie mogul who controlled Columbia Pictures and whose reputed riding crop rages against all and sundry were legendary. An additional hat-tip is extended to *Confidential* magazine which, in effect, Mr. Goodman states, was a slightly yellowish illustrated character assassin, but which had the virtue of having no pretentions beyond a singular aim to sell copies.

It's impossible to sum up cause and effect in Mr. Goodman's book. There is sufficient material to excuse the generality of the title and also to lend it credence. But the author himself shies away from the sociological and contents himself with a collection of "whats" to the exclusion of even a few "whys." This is not to say that the nature of this kind of book demands any psychoanalytical footnotes of vast philosophical truths, but a few casual relationships would not be misplaced along the way.

All in all, anyone who's ever looked at a film or read a movie mag will find much to amuse and amaze in *The Fifty-Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood*. But the albatross that perches on every third page is the same albatross that has prevented several other well intentioned chroniclers of the town from doing a really definitive analysis. This is simply because Hollywood is an inside joke. Its people are insulated and very special. Its legends are the kind that make sense told on a movie set or in a backroom at Romanoffs. They do not lend themselves to the telling to a general readership. In all books, including Mr. Goodman's, that try to analyze this vast Disneyland, it is apparent that their effectiveness gets somewhat blunted after the incision reaches an inch below the surface. The rest of the story—the meaningful, honest, and truly definitive study of special men in a special industry—is yet to be told.

Pacific Palisades, California —Rod Serling

Editor's Shop Talk

(continued from page 132)

Merriam, Elliott P. Skinner, and others, all of them based on field work in Africa.

Also scheduled for future issues are these articles: "The King's Language: Shakespeare's Drama as Social Discovery" by Sigurd Burkhardt; a study of Christian sects in the new India by R. A. Schermerhorn; "Home Service Magazines: Counselors of the Good Life" by Albert Roland; "Athens: City of Dionysus" by Frederic Will; and "The Auto-Beatnik, the Auto-Critic, and the Justification of Nonsense" by Robert Oliphant, an entertaining study of the sense and nonsense of language.

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